

Davy A
MODERN SYSTEM
O F
NATURAL HISTORY.

CONTAINING
Accurate Descriptions, and faithful Histories,
O F
ANIMALS, VEGETABLES, and MINERALS.

Together with
Their Properties, and various Uses in MEDICINE,
MECHANICS, MANUFACTURES, &c.

Illustrated

With a great Variety of COPPER-PLATES, accurately
drawn from Nature, and beautifully engraved.

By the Rev. SAMUEL WARD,
Vicar of Cotterstock, cum Glapthorne, Northamp-
tonshire; and others.

V O L. VII.

*The great Creator did not bestow so much Curiosity and
Workmanship upon his Creatures to be looked upon with a
careless incurious Eye.*

Derham's Phys. Theol. Book xi.

L O N D O N :

Printed for F NEWBERY, the Corner of St. Paul's
Church-yard, Ludgate-street. 1775.



T H E
N A T U R A L H I S T O R Y
O F
B I R D S ;
O R,
A C O M P L E T E S Y S T E M
O F
O R N I T H O L O G Y .

I L L U S T R A T E D

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V O L. III.

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T H E T H R O S T L E .

THIS bird is also called the song-thrush, or mavis. It is the finest of our singing birds, not only for the sweetness and variety of its notes, but for the long continuance of its harmony ; as it entertains us with its song for almost three parts of the year. Like the missel-bird, it chooses to deliver its music from the top of a high-tree, but descends to some low bush or thicket to form its nest ; which is composed of

B 3 earth,

earth, moss, and straw, and the inside is curiously plaistered with clay. It lays five or six eggs, of a pale bluish green, marked with dusky spots. The length of this species is about nine inches, the breadth thirteen inches and an half, and the weight three ounces. It breeds early in the spring, the young being frequently hatched in the beginning of April. In Silesia, these birds build their nests in April and May, on the branches of trees and shrubs in forests; and usually lay four eggs. Sometimes they repair thither from distant countries, and are so numerous in the forests and on the mountains, that they not only afford present food for the inhabitants; but they roast them, and afterwards pickle them in vinegar, in order to preserve them for future repasts: they are taken with snares made of white horse-hair, baited with berries of the white sorbet-tree.

THE RED-WING.

THE red-wing greatly resembles the thrush, but is considerably smaller, weighing only two ounces and a quarter. The colours of both are nearly the

same, except that the side, under the wings and the inner-coverts are of a reddish orange in this bird, and yellow in the throffle. Above each eye a line of yellowish white passes from the bill to the hind-part of the head. The vent feathers are white. The red-wing appears in Great-Britain a few days before the field-fare, and comes from the same countries in very large flocks. They have a disagreeable piping note with us, but in Sweden, they perch on the top of some tree, and sing most agreeably during the spring. They build their nests in hedges, and lay five or six bluish green eggs, spotted with black. This bird is sometimes called the swine-pipe, or wind-thrush.

THE STARE OR STARLING.

THE starling may be distinguished from the rest of this tribe, by the glossy green of its feathers in some lights, and the purple in others. The weight of the male species is above three ounces, and that of the female somewhat less. The length is eight inches and an half, and the breadth fourteen inches and an half. The feathers on the head, neck, and

upper-part of the back are black, varied with a most beautiful green and purple as opposed to different lights. The tips of the feathers on the head are of a yellowish brown, and those on the neck are white: they are of a singular form, being long, narrow, and pointed. The lower-part of the back, the rump, the coverts of the wings, and the lower-part of the breast are black, glossed with green. The tips of the feathers on the breast are white, those of all the rest being yellowish; and the belly is glossed over with a deep purple. The tail is short, and the wings, when closed, reach within half an inch of the end. The legs and feet are black, tinged with red.

The starling breeds in hollow-trees, eaves of houses, towers, ruins, cliffs, and frequently in high rocks over the sea. It lays four or five eggs, of a pale greenish ash-colour; and makes its nest of straw, small fibres of roots, and moss. It has a rougher voice than the rest of its kind, but the deficiency in the melody of its notes, is compensated by the facility with which it is taught to speak. These birds assemble in vast flocks in winter, and feed upon worms and insects. At the approach of spring, they

they assemble in fields, as if in consultation together, and seem to take no nourishment for several days : the majority of them leave the country, and the rest breed here. The flesh of the starling is so remarkably bitter as to be hardly eatable.

This bird has naturally a wild screaming, uncouth note, but it is much esteemed for its aptness in imitating the human voice, speaking articulately, and learning to whistle variety of tunes. A starling, educated under a judicious master, becomes so accomplished as to be sometimes sold for five or six guineas.

Starlings may be taken at about ten days old, and may be fed in the same manner as young black-birds. The person who feeds them should, while they are eating, frequently repeat such words as he would choose to have them learn, and he will find them very apt scholars. Many persons slit their tongues, imagining it will enable them to talk more articulately, but it is a most ridiculous practice, and only tortures the poor animal without being of the least service.

Though naturally a hardy bird, it is subject to the cramp and fits, when confined

finned in a cage. Sometimes it is so suddenly seized, that it will fall from its perch and beat itself to death in a few moments: a spider or meal-worms are a good remedy against these complaints, and should be administered twice or thrice a week; each dose to consist of about three.

THE BLACK AND WHITE INDIAN STARLING.

THIS bird has a sharp-pointed bill, thickish at the base, bowed a little downward, and of a yellowish orange: the forehead next the base of the bill above is white; but the top of the head, the throat, and neck are black, with a greenish gloss. The back, rump, the upper-part of the wings, and the tail are blackish; but the ridge of the wings next the breast is whitish, and the outer edges of the great quills are of a lighter brown than the other parts. The tips of the row of covert feathers next above the quills are white; and the breast, belly, thighs, and covert feathers under the tail are white. A line, of a palish brown colour, runs on the sides of the upper-part of the breast,

breast, forming a ring round the lower-part of the neck behind, and the legs and feet are of a reddish brown. This is an inhabitant of Bengal.

THE YELLOW INDIAN STARLING.

THE bill of this bird is shaped like that of the common starling, of a reddish brown at the base, becoming gradually more dusky towards the point. The iris of the eyes is of a hazel colour, encircled with yellow, and the pupils are black. The forehead, from the bill to the eyes, is of a bright yellow, and the eyes are surrounded with dusky feathers: the top and sides of the head are black. The throat is whitish, the breast of a light yellow; the belly, thighs, and coverts are of a deeper yellow; and the throat and breast have long dusky spots down the shafts of the feathers. The upper part of the neck, back, rump, and coverts on the upper part of the tail are of a bright yellow: the greater quills of the wings are dusky, edged with yellow on their outer webs: all the covert feathers on the upper-side are yellow, with

with dusky spots in the middle of each. The middle feathers of the tail are dusky, tinged with yellow, having yellow tips; and the legs and feet are dusky. This bird inhabits Bengal in the East-Indies.

THE AMERICAN MOCK-BIRD.

THIS is the favourite songster of a region, where the birds excel rather in the beauty of their plumage, than the sweetness of their notes. It is much inferior in beauty to most of the feathered inhabitants of that country, but it has qualifications that render it more amiable. It is about the size of a thrush, has a reddish bill, and the colours of its feathers are white and grey. Exclusive of its own natural notes, which are very musical and solemn, it can assume the tone of every other animal in the forest, whether quadruped or bird. It seems to delight in leading them astray. Sometimes it allures the smaller birds with the call of their males, and when they come near, it terrifies them with the screams of the eagle. It can mimick any of the feathered tribe to the greatest exactness,



Ring Ouzel



Male Blackbird



Female Blackbird



and there is none that has not at times been deceived by its call. Such birds, however, as we usually see famed for mimicking with us, have no peculiar merit of their own, but the mock-bird is ever most sure to please when it is most itself. At those times it frequently visits the houses of the American planters, and passes the whole night on the chimney-top, pouring forth the sweetest variety of notes of any of the feathered creation. So extravagant are some naturalists in their encomiums upon this bird, that the deficiency of other song-birds in that country seems amply atoned for by this animal alone. It builds its nest in the fruit-trees near houses, feeds upon fruits and berries, and is easily domesticated.

THE RING-OUZEL.

THIS is an inhabitant of the mountainous parts of these islands, where they appear in companies of five or six. They are somewhat larger than a black-bird. In some of them the bill is wholly black, in others the upper-half is yellow: there are a few bristles on each side of the mouth. The feathers

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on the head, and the upper-part of the body, are dusky, edged with pale brown : the quill-feathers, and the tail are black. The coverts of the wings, the upper-part of the breast, and the belly, are dusky, slightly edged with ash-colour. The breast is adorned with a white crescent in the middle, with the horns pointing to the hind-part of the neck. This crescent is of a pure white in some, and of a dusky hue in others. Neither the females nor any of the young birds are possessed of this mark, which has occasioned some naturalists to form two species of them. This bird is found in Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and other places in the north of England. It is eleven inches in length, and seventeen in breadth.

THE WATER-OUZEL.

THIS bird is also called the water-crake. It frequents small brooks, particularly those that run through a rocky country. It is of a very retired nature, and is never seen but single, or with its mate. It makes its nest in holes in the banks, and lays five white eggs, adorned with a fine blush of red.

It feeds on small fish and insects ; and, though it is not web-footed, and the whole form of the body denotes it to be a land-fowl, yet it will dart itself quite under the water after fish. The nest is curiously constructed of hay and the fibres of roots, and lined with oak-leaves ; to which it has a grand entrance made of moss. This bird is frequently seen in the northern counties, and particularly in Wales. It is seven inches in length, and eleven in breadth, and weighs about two ounces and an half. The bill is narrow, the eye-lids are white ; the head, cheeks, and hind-parts of the head, are dusky : the back, the coverts of the wings, and the coverts of the tail are also dusky, bordered with bluish ash-colour : the throat and breast are white, and the belly of an iron colour. The legs are of a pale blue before, and black behind. When it is sitting, it often flirts up its tail, which is short and black.

THE INDIAN OUZEL.

IN shape and size this bird resembles the jack-daw. The breast is red, and the upper-part of the body entirely black,

black, except that the feathers near the rump are edged with white. The bill is like that of the black-bird, and the tail also resembles that of the black-bird.

THE BRASILIAN OUZEL.

THIS bird is of a deep red all over the body, except the tail, which is blackish. The bill is short, like that of a sparrow; the tail is long, and the feet and legs black.

The party-coloured ouzel is principally of two colours, namely blackish, and a yellowish red. There is another, with a red line near the bill, which in other respects resembles the former.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

“THE nightingale,” says Pliny, “that for fifteen days and nights hid in the thickest shades, continues her note without intermission, deserves our attention and wonder. How surprizing that so great a voice can reside in so small a body! Such perseverance in so minute an animal! With what a musical propriety are the sounds it produces

duces modulated ! the note at one time drawn out with a long breath, now stealing off into a different cadence, now interrupted by a break, then changing into a new note by an unexpected transition, now seeming to renew the same strain, then deceiving expectation ! she sometimes seems to murmur within herself ; full, deep, sharp, swift, drawling, trembling ; now at the top, the middle, and the bottom of the scale ! In short, in that little bill seems to reside all the melody which man has vainly laboured to bring from a variety of musical instruments. Some even seem to be possessed of a different song from the rest, and contend with each other with great ardour. The bird overcome is then seen only to discontinue its song with its life *.

The nightingale takes its name from *night*, and the Saxon word *galan*, to sing ; expressive of the time of its harmony. It is about the size of the red-start, but slenderer, longer bodied, and more elegantly formed. The head and back are of a pale tawny, dashed with olive : the throat, breast, and upper-part of

* Plin. lib. x. ch. 29.

the belly are of a light glossy ash-colour, and the lower-belly almost white. The exterior webs of the quill-feathers are of a dull reddish brown : the tail is of a deep tawny red. The legs and feet are of a deep ash-colour. The irides are hazel, and the eyes remarkably large and piercing.

This bird, the most celebrated of the feathered tribe, for the variety, length, and sweetness of its notes, visits England in the beginning of April, and leaves it in August. It is found only in some of the southern parts of the country ; being totally unknown in Scotland, Ireland, or North-Wales. With us they frequent thick hedges, and low coppices ; usually keeping in the middle of the bush, and consequently are but seldom seen. They begin their song in the evening, and generally continue it the whole night. For weeks together, if undisturbed, they sit upon the same tree ; and Shakespear rightly describes the nightingale sitting nightly in the same place. The nightingale was the favourite bird of Milton, who often introduces it, and usually expresses its love of solitude and night. He thus describes

describes the approach of evening, and the retiring of all animals to their repose.

Silence accompanied ; for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
Were sunk, all but the wakeful *nightingale*,
She all night long her amorous descant sung.

Eve, in the night preceding her fall, dreams she is reproached in the following terms, with losing the beauties of the night, by indulging too long a repose :

Why sleep'st thou, Eve ? Now is the pleasant time,
The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
To the *night-warbling* bird, that now awake
Tunes sweetest his love-labour'd song.

Nightingales sing the nuptial song of Adam and Eve, in the following rapturous lines.

The earth
Gave signs of gratulation, and each hill ;
Joyous the birds ; fresh gales and gentle airs
Whisper'd it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung rose, flung odors from the spicy shrub,
Disporting, till the amorous bird of night
Sung spousal, and bid haste the evening star
On his hill-top to light the bridal lamp.
These lul'd by *nightingales*, embracing slept ;
And on their naked limbs the flowery roof
Shower'd roses, which the morn repair'd.

From

From Pliny's description of the nightingale, it might be imagined that it was possessed of a persevering strain: this indeed is the fact with regard to the nightingale in Italy; but in our hedges in England, the little songstress is by no means so liberal of her music. Her note is soft, various, and interrupted. She so frequently pauses, that the pausing song would be the proper epithet for this bird's music with us; which is more pleasing than the warbling of any other bird, because it is heard at a time when all the rest are silent.

The nightingale builds its nest about the beginning of May: it is composed of straw, moss, and the leaves of trees; and its situation is usually near the bottom of hedges, where the bushes are thickest and best covered. It is indeed so cunningly secreted, that it generally escapes the penetrating eye of the school-boy. The nightingale lays four or five eggs, which are of a brown nutmeg colour; but, in our cold climate, the whole number is seldom hatched.

The sweetness of this bird's music has induced many to abridge its liberty

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to be secured of its song. Its notes, however, in captivity are less alluring. Gesner indeed allows it to be the most agreeable songster in a cage, and assures us that it is possessed of a most admirable faculty of talking. He even relates a long dialogue which passed between two nightingales at an inn in Ratibon, in which not only the human voice was most admirably imitated, but great sagacity and strength of argument were displayed on both sides. Thus it is when we have high reputation for any one quality, the world is then ready enough to give us fame for others to which we have very small pretensions.

The nightingale seldom sings near its nest, lest it should be discovered by that means. It frequents cool and shady places, among small groves and bushes; but it delights in no high trees, except the oak. Young nightingales should not be taken from the nest, till they are almost as well fledged as the old ones; and though, when they are old, they are apt to be sullen, and refuse their meat, yet their mouths are easily opened; and when they are thus forcibly fed for a few days, they
begin

12 *The* ROBIN RED-BREAST.

begin to be reconciled to their situation, and voluntarily take their food.

THE ROBIN RED-BREAST.

THE song of the red-breast is remarkably fine and soft; and the more to be valued, as we enjoy it the greatest part of the winter, and early in the spring. The note of other birds is louder, and their inflections more capricious; but the voice of this bird is tender, delicate, and well supported. During the spring, the red-breast haunts the grove, the garden, and the wood. In winter, when there is a scarcity of provision, it will even enter houses to seek its food; and is remarkably sociable with mankind, though so extremely petulant as to be at constant war with its own tribe.

The nightingale, the swallow, the tit-mouse, and most of the soft-billed birds, leave us in the winter, when there ceases to be a plentiful supply of insect food; but the red-breast remains continually with us, and endeavours to support the famine of winter, by chirping round the warm habitations of mankind, by coming into those shel-

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The ROBIN RED-BREAST. 23

ters where the rigour of the season is artificially expelled, and where some few insects are to be found, attracted by the same cause.

In some countries, the red-breast builds in the crevice of some mossy bank, or at the foot of an hawthorn in hedge-rows : in others it chooses the thickest coverts, and conceals its nest with oak-leaves. The nest is composed of coarse materials : the outside consists of dry green moss, intermixed with coarse wool, small dry sticks, straws, dry leaves, and peelings from young trees ; with a few horse-hairs within side. It usually lays five or six eggs, which are of a cream-colour, sprinkled all over with fine reddish spots ; which are so numerous at the blunt end that they almost appear as one.

The bill of the red-breast is dusky ; the forehead, chin, throat, and breast, are of a deep orange-colour. The head, the hind-part of the neck, the back, and tail, are of a deep ash-colour, tinged with green. The wings are rather darker, with the edges of a yellowish hue. The legs and feet are dusky.

In a confined state, these birds are subject to the cramp and giddiness, for the cure of which meal-worms are effectual. There are many kinds of insects which birds will greedily devour, and which would probably relieve them under their maladies, could they be at all times conveniently procured : such as young smooth caterpillars, for a red-breast will not touch one that is hairy, and some sorts of spiders, ants, &c. but no insect is more innocent, or agrees better with birds in general than the meal-worm, which may at all times be procured at the meal-shops. A little liquorice, or saffron in their water, will make them long-winded, and assist them in their song. A young red-breast, brought up from the nest, may be taught to pipe or whistle delightfully ; but an old bird is apt to be sullen, though he may be induced by degrees to exert his powers.

THE RED-START.

THIS bird appears among us only in the spring and summer, and visits us almost at the same time with the nightingale.

It

It makes its nest in hollow-trees, holes in walls, and other buildings; it is formed of moss on the outside, and lined with hair and feathers. The red-start lays four or five eggs, which resemble those of the hedge-sparrow, but are smaller, and of a paler blue. It is so remarkably shy, that it will forsake its nest if the eggs are only touched; and if the young ones are touched, it will either starve them, or throw them out of the nest. It has a delicate soft note; but, being a sullen bird, it is difficult to keep it alive in confinement. It will sing by night as well as by day, and will learn to whistle, and imitate other birds.

These birds breed in May, and their young are generally fit to be taken about the middle of that month. When taken young, they should be kept warm, and managed like the nightingale.

The bill and legs of the male red-start are black, and the forehead white. The crown of the head, the back part of the neck, and the back, are of a deep blue-grey: the cheeks and throat are black; the breast, rump, and sides are red; the wings are brown, the two middle feathers of the tail are brown,

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and

26 *The* INDIAN RED-START.

and the others red. The top of the head and back of the female are of a deep ash-colour ; the rump and tail of a duller red than those of the male, and the breast of a paler red.

Gesner mentions three sorts of red-starts, one of which is the same with that which we have described above ; the second has a red tail ; and the third, which is seen about Strasburgh, is blue at the upper-part of the breast, and of a yellowish red at the bottom : the belly is of an ash-colour, and the legs brown.

THE INDIAN RED START.

THE bill of this bird is dusky at the base, and black at the point. The top of the head is covered with long, soft, black feathers, hanging over behind in the form of a crest ; and under each eye is a scarlet spot. The throat, breast, belly, and thighs are white ; but the sides of the neck and breast are black. The hind-part of the neck, the wings, and tail are of a dark brown ; and the ridge of the wing next the breast is whitish : the feathers about the vents, and the coverts beneath the tail

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tail are of a fine red colour; but the legs and feet are black. It is a native of Bengal.

THE SKY-LARK.

THE music of any bird in captivity produces no very pleasing sensations: it is but the mirth of a little animal, insensible of its unfortunate situation. It is the landscape, the grove, the contest upon the hawthorn, the fluttering from branch to branch, the soaring in the air, and the answering of its young, that gives a true relish to the song of a bird. These united, improve each other, and raise the mind to a state of the highest and most innocent exultation. How delightful to behold the lark warbling upon the wing! raising its notes as it soars, till it seems lost in the immense heights above us; the note continuing, though the bird has disappeared! To see it afterwards descending, with a swell as it comes from the clouds, yet sinking gradually as it approaches its nest, the spot where all its affections are centered, is pleasing beyond expression.

The sky-lark and the wood-lark are the only birds that sing as they fly : the former begins its song before the earliest dawn. Milton, in his allegro, beautifully expresses this circumstance.

To hear the lark begin his flight,
And singing startle the dull night,
From his watch tower in the skies
'Till the dappled dawn doth rise.

THE lark builds its nest upon the ground, beneath some turf that serves to hide and shelter it : sometimes in corn-fields, or in pasture of any kind. It lays four or five brown eggs, thickly streaked with spots of a darker brown. It generally has young ones about the beginning of May : while the female is sitting, the male usually entertains her with his singing ; and while he rises to an imperceptible height, he never once loses sight, either of his loved partner or the nest, while he is ascending or descending. This harmony continues several months, beginning early in the spring on pairing. In winter, when their song forsakes them, they assemble in vast flocks, grow very fat, and are taken in great numbers by the bird-catchers.

The sky-lark is about seven inches in length, and twelve and a half in breadth

and the weight is about one ounce and an half. The bill is slender, the upper-chap being dusky, and the lower yellow: there is a yellow spot above the edges: the crown of the head is of a reddish brown, spotted with black; and the hind-part of the head is of an ash-colour. It has the faculty of erecting the feathers of the head. The feathers on the back, and coverts of the wings, are dusky, edged with a reddish brown. The upper-part of the breast is yellow, spotted with black; and the lower-part of the body of a pale yellow. The legs are dusky, the soles of the feet yellow, and the hind-claw very long and straight. The male is distinguished from the female by being browner, and more particularly by the length of the heel or hind-claw; for Gefner affirms he has seen them above two inches long.

The young of these birds should be taken when they are about ten days old, or sooner, for they quit their nests very early.

THE WOOD-LARK.

THIS bird is six inches and an half in length, from the tip of the bill to

the end of the tail ; and twelve inches and an half in breadth, when the wings are extended. Its weight is about an ounce and a quarter. It is inferior in size to the sky-lark, and of a shorter and thicker form ; the colours are paler, and its note less sonorous, though not less sweet. By these and the following characters, it may be easily distinguished from the common kind : it perches on trees, and whistles like the blackbird ; but the sky-lark always sits upon the ground. The crown of the head and the back, are marked with large black spots ; edged with pale reddish brown : a whitish coronet of feathers furrounds the head, extending from eye to eye : the throat is of a yellowish white, spotted with black ; the breast tinged with red, and the belly white : the coverts of the wings are brown, edged with a dullish white : the quill feathers are dusky ; the first three being white at the exterior edges, and the others yellow. In the common lark the first and second feathers of the wing are nearly of an equal length ; but, in the wood-lark, the first feather of the wing is shorter than the second : the tail is black, the legs are of a cream colour.

colour, and the hind claw is very long. Like the common lark, the wood-lark will sing as it flies, and will also exert its singing faculties in the night. It builds on the ground in the same manner as the common lark, but the species is not so numerous. The male is distinguished from the female by its superior size.

The wood-lark generally lays four eggs, and produces about four young ones, which are very tender birds, and difficult to be reared; and therefore should not be taken till they are well feathered: they should be kept clean and warm. Some prefer the singing of the wood-lark to the nightingale, and in the months of May, June, and July, it is often mistaken for that bird, especially in hot weather, when the sky is serene, but principally when the females are performing the duty of incubation.

This bird in its wild state feeds upon beetles, caterpillars, and other insects. Apparently sensible of its own melodious song, it will never imitate the note of another bird, unless it be brought up from the nest: then indeed it sometimes submits to learn the song of another.

THE WHITE-LARK.

THIS bird inhabits the mountains of Lapland, but goes into Sweden in winter. It has a short body and white wings; but the first outward feathers are black, as well as the tail, and the sides are of a pure white. Like the common sky-lark, it never perches upon trees.

THE TIT-LARK.

THE tit-lark frequents low marshy grounds, and, like other larks, builds its nest among the grass, laying five or six eggs, which are of a dark brown colour; and its young are fit to take about the beginning of May. Like the wood-lark, it sits on trees, and has a remarkable fine note, greatly resembling that of the canary-bird. It is a bird of an elegant and slender shape; five inches and an half in length, and nine in breadth. The bill is black: the back and head are of a greenish brown, spotted with black; the throat, and lower-part of the belly, are white; the breast is yellow, spotted with black:

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The CRESTED LARK. 33

the tail is dusky. The claw on the hind toe is very long, and the feet are of a pale yellow. The cock is yellower than the hen, especially under the throat, on the breast, and legs.

This bird comes with the nightingale about the end of March, and goes about the beginning of September. Like the nightingale, it grows fat before it goes away. If properly attended, it is a hardy long-lived bird.

THE CRESTED LARK.

THIS differs from the common lark in being longer in the crest, in being less beautiful, in its not rising so high in the air, and in its not remaining so long there; in its not flying in flocks, and its frequenting the banks of lakes and rivers. The crest consists of about seven, eight, or nine feathers; which it can erect, spread, or contract at pleasure. The outer-parts of some of the pinion feathers are of a dusky white or cream-colour; but the throat is beautifully spotted: the breast and belly are a yellowish white; and the tail is about two inches long, some of the outer-

THE WHITE-LARK.

THIS bird inhabits the mountains of Lapland, but goes into Sweden in winter. It has a short body and white wings; but the first outward feathers are black, as well as the tail, and the sides are of a pure white. Like the common sky-lark, it never perches upon trees.

THE TIT-LARK.

THE tit-lark frequents low marshy grounds, and, like other larks, builds its nest among the grass, laying five or six eggs, which are of a dark brown colour; and its young are fit to take about the beginning of May. Like the wood-lark, it sits on trees, and has a remarkable fine note, greatly resembling that of the canary-bird. It is a bird of an elegant and slender shape; five inches and an half in length, and nine in breadth. The bill is black: the back and head are of a greenish brown, spotted with black; the throat, and lower-part of the belly, are white; the breast is yellow, spotted with black:

the

The CRESTED LARK. 33

the tail is dusky. The claw on the hind toe is very long, and the feet are of a pale yellow. The cock is yellower than the hen, especially under the throat, on the breast, and legs.

This bird comes with the nightingale about the end of March, and goes about the beginning of September. Like the nightingale, it grows fat before it goes away. If properly attended, it is a hardy long-lived bird.

THE CRESTED LARK.

THIS differs from the common lark in being longer in the crest, in being less beautiful, in its not rising so high in the air, and in its not remaining so long there; in its not flying in flocks, and its frequenting the banks of lakes and rivers. The crest consists of about seven, eight, or nine feathers; which it can erect, spread, or contract at pleasure. The outer-parts of some of the pinion feathers are of a dusky white or cream-colour; but the throat is beautifully spotted: the breast and belly are of a yellowish white; and the tail is about two inches long, some of the outer-

34 *The* LESSER FIELD LARK.

outer-feathers having white borders, others red, and others black.

THE LESSER CRESTED LARK.

MR. Ray, in his history of English birds, says this species is to be found in Yorkshire; but gives only the following brief description of it from Aldrovandus: it is like the greater crested lark, except that it is smaller, and not so brown. For the smallness of its body, it has a considerable tuft on its head, and its legs are red. Mr. Bolton, in his list of Yorkshire birds, says this species are very numerous in that county.

THE LESSER FIELD LARK.

THIS is larger than the tit-lark; the head and hind-part of the neck are of a pale brown, spotted with dusky lines, which appear but faintly on the neck. The back and rump are of a dirty green; the middle of each feather of the former being marked with black, and those of the latter plain. The coverts of the wings are dusky, edged with white. The throat and breast are yellow;

yellow; the latter being marked with large black spots. The belly is white, and the tail is dusky. The legs are of a very pale brown; and it is strongly distinguished from the tit-lark by the claw on the hind-toe, which is extremely short for one of the lark kind.

THE RED LARK.

THIS bird, which was discovered by Mr. Edwards in the neighbourhood of London, is about the size of the lesser field lark. The head, the hind-part of the neck, and the back, are of a dusky brown. A blackish line passes through each eye, and above that a clay-coloured one. The wings are of a dark brown; and the tail is of the same colour, except that the interior feathers are wholly white. The under side, from the bill to the tail, is of a reddish brown, marked with dusky spots: the legs are of a dark brown, and the hind-claw is shorter than that of the common lark. When the wings are gathered up, the third quill feather from the body reaches to its tip, like that of the water wagtail genus.

THE

THE BLACK LARK.

THE bill of this bird is of a dusky yellow, and the iris of the eye is yellow. It is entirely of a dusky brown, inclining to black, with a reddish cast, except on the back-part of the head, where there are feathers of a dusky yellow; and on the belly where some of the feathers are edged with white. The legs, feet, and claws are of a dirty yellow. This bird is not often seen in England.

THE GRASSHOPPER LARK.

THIS is the bird which Mr. Ray describes as having the note of the grasshopper, though louder and shriller. When it sings it sits on the highest branch of a bush, with its mouth open and straight up, and its wings disheveled. It is considerably smaller than the tit-lark. The bill, which is slender, is of a dusky colour: the head and the upper-part of the body is of a greenish brown, spotted with black. The quill-feathers are dusky, edged

with an olive brown: the tail, which is very long, is composed of twelve sharp-pointed feathers; the two longest being in the middle, and the others on each side growing gradually shorter. The breast and belly are of a yellowish white; and the hind claw is shorter and more crooked than is usual among the lark kind.

THE WILLOW LARK.

THIS bird is inferior in size to the grasshopper-lark; but it has exactly the same note and actions. It is annually seen in some willow-hedges in Flintshire, where it continues the whole summer. The head, back, and coverts of the wings are of a yellowish brown, marked with dusky spots: the quill feathers are dusky, except that their exterior edges are of a dirty yellow. The throat is white, and the whole under-side of the body is of a yellowish white: the tail is of a dark brown; the legs are of a yellowish brown, and the hind-claw is short and crooked.

THE PETIT LARK.

THIS is smaller than any of the former, and has a slender sharp-pointed bill of a dusky colour. The head, the neck, the upper-part of the body, and the wings, are of a dusky olive-green; but the latter are shaded with black, and have a dusky white border on the two first rows of the covert feathers; the breast, and lower-parts of the body, are of a pale brown, with faintish large spots of black. The tail is about two inches long, and the outermost feathers are white about half way, with dusky edges; but the others are browner, with yellow edges. The feet are of a pale brown, and the claws are long.

THE CANARY BIRD.

BY the name it appears that these birds came originally from the Canary islands, but we have them only from Germany, where they are bred in great numbers, and sold into different parts of Europe. When they were first brought into Europe, is not certainly known; but it is certain that about

century ago they were sold at very high prices, and kept only for the amusement of the great. They have since been greatly multiplied, and their price is diminished in proportion.

This bird was originally peculiar to those isles, to which it owes its name ; the same that were known to the ancients by the addition of the *Fortunate*. The happy temperature of the air, the spontaneous productions of the ground in the varieties of fruits ; the sprightly and chearful disposition of the inhabitants ; and the harmony arising from the number of birds found there, procured them that romantic distinction. On the same spot these charming song-birds are still to be found, but they are now so plenty among us, that we are under no necessity of crossing the ocean for them.

In its native regions, the canary-bird is of a dusky grey colour, and so different from those usually seen in Europe, that doubts have arisen whether it be the same species. With us they have that variety of colouring usual in domestic fowls ; some being white, others mottled, and others beautifully edged with green ; but in this country

they are more esteemed for their note than their beauty, having a high piercing pipe, continuing for some time in one breath without intermission, then gradually raising it higher and higher, with infinite variety. It is certainly one of the finch tribe.

Next to the nightingale, the Canary bird is considered as the most celebrated songster : it is also reared with less difficulty than any of the soft billed birds, and continues its song throughout the year ; consequently it is rather the most common in our houses.

In choosing the Canary bird, those are the best in health that appear lively and bold, standing upright upon the perch like a sparrow-hawk, without being intimidated at every thing that stirs. In observing him he should not be approached too near, lest a motion of the hand should disturb him ; which, for a short time, will make him appear sprightly and in health ; but if he is observed at a proper distance, it may soon be discovered whether it is the effect of fear, or the natural spirit of the bird. If he stands up boldly, without crouching or shrinking his feathers, and his eyes look chearful, and

not drowsy, there is little doubt of his being a healthy bird; but if, on the contrary, he is apt to put his head under his wing, and stand all of an heap, he is certainly disordered.

In choosing a Canary bird, the melody of the song should also be attended to: some of them will open with the notes of the nightingale, running through a variety of that bird's modulations, and with the song of the tit-lark. Others begin like the sky-lark, and, by a soft melodious turn, fall into the notes of the nightingale. These, however, are lessons taught the Canary bird in its domestic state; but its natural note is loud, shrill, and piercing. Each of these songs have their admirers, but the second is most generally esteemed.

Though they sometimes breed all the year round, they most usually begin to pair in April, and to breed in June and August. The best breed is said to be produced between the English and French birds. Towards the latter end of March, a cock and hen should be put together in a small cage: though they disagree a little at first they will soon become thoroughly reconciled.

The situation of the room where they are kept, must not deprive them of the benefit of the morning sun ; and the windows should not be of glass, but where they may perfectly enjoy the benefit of the free air. The floor of the room should be kept clean, and sometimes gravel or sifted sand should be strewed over it. There should be two windows, one at each end of the room ; and several perches at proper distances for the birds to settle on, as they occasionally fly backwards and forwards. Some place a tree in the middle of the room, which diverts the birds, and some of them choose to build their nests in it. But care must be taken to secure those nests from falling through ; and, if they appear to be in any danger, to tie the tree closer to prevent it.

While the birds are pairing, they are usually fed with soft meat, such as bread, maw-feed, a little scalded rape-feed, and about a third part of an egg, observing to grate the bread and rape-feed very fine. Materials for making their nests, such as hay, wool, cotton, and hair, should be placed in their apartment, in so loose a manner that

the birds may have no difficulty in collecting what is necessary for their purpose. The male assists the female in building the nest, and takes his turn with her in sitting upon the eggs, and feeding the young. They are usually about two or three days in making their nest, and the female generally lays five eggs, which are hatched at the end of about fourteen days. These birds are sometimes so extremely prolific, that the female will be ready to hatch a second brood, before the first are able to desert the nest. On these occasions she quits the nest and her young, in order to provide herself with another to lodge her new brood in. In the mean time the faithful male nurses the young which are left behind, and fits them for a state of independence.

When the young are produced, the parents should be supplied with a sufficiency of soft food every day; and also with cabbage, lettuce, and chickweed; in June shepherd's-purse, and in July and August plantane. They should have no groundfil after the young are excluded. With these delicacies the old ones will carefully feed their young; but when they are able

to

to feed themselves, they are usually taken from the nest, and put into cages. Their food then is the yolk of an egg boiled hard, with an equal quantity of grated bread, and a little scalded rape-seed, bruised till it becomes fine: it may also be mixed with a little maw-feed; after which all may be blended together. They should have a fresh supply of this food every day.

These birds will produce with the goldfinch and linnet, and the offspring is called a mule-bird, because, like that animal, it proves barren.

THE SWALLOW.

THE swallow-tribe are all known by their very large mouths, which are always kept open when they fly; they are equally remarkable for their short slender feet, which appear as if they were hardly able to support the weight of their bodies; their wings are immoderately long for their bulk; their plumage is glossed with a rich purple, and their note is a slight twittering, which they seldom exert but upon the wing.

Yellow Hammer



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The peculiar conformation of this tribe seems attended with a similar peculiarity of manners. Insects are their food, which they always pursue flying, In fine weather, therefore, when the insects are most likely to be abroad, swallows are continually upon the wing, and pursue their prey with amazing swiftness and agility. The smaller animals in general find safety by winding and turning, when they endeavour to avoid the greater: the lark thus evades the pursuit of the hawk, and man the crocodile. Insects upon the wing endeavour, in this manner, to avoid the swallow; but nature has admirably fitted this bird to pursue them through the shortest turnings. Besides the uncommon length of wing, it is provided with a long tail, which, like a rudder, instantly turns it in its most rapid motions. It is also possessed of the greatest swiftness, and the most extreme agility.

When the spring begins to rouse the insect tribe from their annual state of torpidity; when the gnat and the beetle put off their earthly robes and venture into air, the swallow returns from its long migration beyond the ocean.

ocean. At first it appears but seldom, and flies heavily and feebly ; but, as the weather grows warmer, and the number of insects encreases, it gathers activity and strength. A rainy season indeed, by repelling the insects, stints the swallow in its food ; it is then seen slowly skimming along the surface of the ground, and frequently resting after a flight of a few minutes. In general, however, it keeps upon the wing, and moving with amazing rapidity. When fair weather appears, the insect tribe feel the genial influence, and make bolder flights ; the swallow following them in their aerial journeys, and often rising to imperceptible heights in the pursuit. At the approach of foul weather, the insects have immediate intelligence, and from the swallows pursuing them near the earth, we are often apprized of the change that will speedily ensue.

Among naturalists, there are three opinions concerning the manner the swallow tribes dispose of themselves, after they have fled from the countries in which they make their summer residence. Herodotus mentions one species that resides in Egypt the whole year :

Prosper

Prosper Alpinus asserts the same * ; and Mr. Loten, late governor of Ceylon, declares that those of Java never remove. All of the kind which we have heard of, except these, observe a periodical migration or retreat. The swallows of Norway, North-America, Kamtschatka, the temperate parts of Europe, of Aleppo, and Jamaica, all agree in this one point ; of which the reader may be convinced, by having recourse to Pontoppidan's History of Norway, vol. ii. page 98 ; Catesby's History of Carolina, vol. i. page 51 ; the History of Kamtschatka, page 162 ; Russel's History of Aleppo, page 70 ; and the Philosophical Transactions, N^o. 36.

A defect of insect-food on the approach of winter in cold countries appears a sufficient reason for the swallows quitting them ; but since it is probable that the same cause does not subsist in the warm climates, recourse should be had to some other reason for their vanishing.

The first of the three opinions has the utmost appearance of probability ;

* Hist. Egypt, i. 198.

which

which is, that they remove nearer the sun, where they can find a continual supply of their natural food, and a temperature of air adapted to their constitutions. M. Adanson has proved beyond contradiction that this is the case with some species of European swallows. We often observe them assembled in vast flocks, on churches, rocks, and trees previous to their departure hence; and Mr. Collinson, and many others have proved that they return in equal numbers. Sir Charles Wager gives the following account of what happened to him in one of his voyages. "Returning home," says Sir Charles, "in the spring of the year, as I came into sounding in our channel, a great flock of swallows came and settled on all my rigging; every rope was covered; they hung one another like a swarm of bees; the decks and carving were filled with them. They seemed almost famished and spent, and were only feathers and bones; but being recruited with a night's rest, took their flight in the morning *.

This very great fatigue

* Phil. Transf, vol. ii. part ii. p. 459.

evidently proves that their journey must have been very long, considering the amazing swiftness of these birds : it is probable they had crossed the Atlantic ocean, and were returning from the shores of Senegal, or other parts of Africa.

The second opinion is supported by great antiquity. Aristotle and Pliny are of opinion that swallows do not remove to any great distance from their summer habitation, but winter in the hollows of rocks, and lose their feathers during that period. Many ingenious men have adopted the former part of their opinion ; and several proofs have lately been produced, that some species, at least, have been discovered in a torpid state. The honourable Mr. Dains Barrington, a few years ago, communicated the following fact to Mr. Pennant, on the authority of the late lord Belhaven, that numbers of swallows have been found in old dry walls, and in sand-hills near his lordship's seat in East-Lothian ; not once only, but from year to year. The following account of some swallows on the Rhine was communicated to Mr. Peter Collinson, by Mr. Achard, and
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was read before the Royal Society the twenty-first of April, 1763.

“ In the latter end of March,” says Mr. Achard, “ I took my passage down the Rhine, to Rotterdam. A little below Basil the south bank of the river was very high and steep, of a sandy soil, sixty or eighty feet above the water.

I was surprized at seeing, near the top of the cliff, some boys, tied to ropes, hanging down, doing something. The singularity of these adventurous boys, and the business they so daringly attempted, made us stop our navigation, to inquire into the meaning of it. The watermen told us, they were searching the holes in the cliff for swallows or martens, which took refuge in them, and lodged there all the winter, until warm weather, and then they came abroad again.

The boys, being let down by their comrades, to the holes, put in a long rammer, with a screw at the end, such as is used to unload guns ; and, twisting it about, drew out the birds. For a trifle I procured some of them. When I first had them, they seemed stiff and lifeless. I put one of them in my bosom

bosom, between my skin and shirt, and laid another on a board, the sun shining full and warm upon it : and one or two of my companions did the like.

That in my bosom revived in about a quarter of an hour : feeling it move I took it out to look at it, and saw it stretch itself upon my hand ; but, perceiving it not sufficiently come to itself, I put it in again : in about another quarter, feeling it flutter pretty briskly, I took it out and admired it. Being now perfectly recovered, before I was aware, it took flight : the covering of the boat prevented my seeing where it went. The bird on the board, though exposed to a full sun, yet, I presume, from a chillness of the air, did not revive, so as to be able to fly."

Such is Mr. Achard's account, on which the following observations were made by Mr. Collinson.

" What I collect, from this gentleman's relation, is, That it was the practice of the boys, annually to take these birds, by their apparatus and ready method of doing it ; and the frequency of it was no remarkable thing to the watermen. Next, it confirmed my former sentiments, that some of this

low-tribe go away, and some stay behind, in these dormitories, all the winter. If my friend had been particular, as to the species, it would have settled that point."

We cannot but assent to the above circumstances, though seemingly contradictory to the common course of nature in regard to other birds. We must therefore divide our belief respecting these two very different opinions, and conclude that one part of the swallow-tribe emigrate, and that others have their winter quarters at home.

The third notion is too amazing and unnatural to merit the least attention. The first who broached the opinion of swallows passing the winter immersed under ice, at the bottom of lakes, or beneath the water of the sea, was Olaus Magnus, archbishop of Upsal, who very gravely informs us that they are frequently found in clustered masses at the bottom of the northern lakes, mouth to mouth, wing to wing, foot to foot; and that they creep down the reeds in autumn to their subaqueous retreats. That when old fishermen discover such a mass, they throw it again into the water; but when young in-
exper-

experienced ones take it, they will, by thawing the birds at a fire, bring them indeed to the use of their wings, which will continue but a very short time, being owing to a premature and forced revival *.

Credit has been given to the submer-
sion of swallows by some of our own
countrymen; and Klein strongly pa-
tronizes this doctrine †. He relates
the following history of their manner
of retiring, which he received from
some countrymen and others. They
asserted that sometimes the swallows
assembled in numbers on a reed, till it
broke and sunk with them to the bot-
tom; and before their immersion they
had a dirge of a quarter of an hour's
length. That others would unite in
laying hold of a straw with their bills,
and so plunge down in society. Others
again would form a large mass by cling-
ing together with their feet, and in
that manner commit themselves to the
deep.

When the summer is fairly begun,
and more than a sufficient supply of

* Derham's Phys. Theol. 349. Pontoppidan's
Hist. Norw. i. 99.

† Klein Hist. Av. 205. 206.

food presents itself, the swallow then begins to think of forming a progeny. The nest is built with great industry and art, particularly by the common swallow, which builds it on the tops of chimneys. The martin fixes it to the eaves of houses, or against the sides of lofty door-posts. The goat-sucker, it is said, builds it on the bare ground. The nest is built with mud, well tempered with the bill, moistened with water for the better adhesion; and strengthened by grass and fibres: within it is lined, with a door to enter at on one side, not far from the bottom; but the swallow leaves her nest quite open.

The swallow lays five or six white eggs, speckled with red, and sometimes breeds twice a year. This happens when the parents come early, when the season is peculiarly mild, and when they begin to pair soon. Sometimes they find a difficulty in rearing even a single nest, especially when the weather has been severe, or the nests have been destroyed before they were finished.

The house, or common swallow, is distinguished from all others, by the extreme

extreme forkyness of its tail, and by the red spot on the forehead and under the chin. The crown of the head, the upper-part of the body, and the coverts of the wings are black, glossed with a rich purplish blue. The breast and belly are white tinged with red; the tail is black, and the two middle feathers plain: the others being marked transversely with a white spot near their ends. The tongue is short, broad, and of a yellowish colour, as well as the palate; but the other parts of the mouth are blackish. The eyes are pretty large, and the iris is of a hazel-colour.

When swallows have returned at their usual time, after a severe winter, many of them have perished for want of food, because there were no insects to be found flying in the air. Reaumur assures us, that the swallows which appeared first after the long and severe frost in 1740, all died of hunger. Hence it is evident they always frequent places where they expect plenty of food; and therefore they leave us when the insects that fly in the air begin to fail.

THE

THE MARTIN.

THE martin is smaller than the former, and its tail is much less forked. The head, and upper-part of the body, except the rump, is black, glossed with blue: the breast, belly, and rump are white; and the feet are covered with a short white down. This is the second of the swallow kind that appears among us. It builds, as we have already observed, under the eaves of houses, and its nest consists of the same materials as that of the common swallow, but is not open above like that, having only a small hole at the side for admittance. This species sometimes builds against the sides of high cliffs over the sea. It is a later breeder than the common swallow. This bird is about six inches in length, and ten and an half in breadth, when the wings are extended.

THE SAND MARTIN.

THIS is the least of the swallow kind, being only five inches and a quarter in length. The head, and all the upper-part of the body, is mouse-coloured:

coloured : the throat is white, encircled with a mouse-coloured ring : the belly is white, and the feet are smooth and black. It builds in holes in sand-pits, and in the banks of rivers, making its nest of hay, straw, and feathers ; and lays five or six white eggs.

THE SWIFT OR BLACK MARTIN.

THIS species is the largest of the swallow kind ; but its weight is exceeding small in proportion to its extent of wing : for it only weighs one ounce, and the extent of its wings is eighteen inches : the length of the bird is about eight inches. The feet are so exceedingly small, that the action of walking and rising from the ground is vastly difficult : nature, however, has made it sufficient amends, by furnishing it with ample means for an easy and continued flight. It is more on the wing than any other swallow, and its flight is more rapid. It breeds under the eaves of houses, in steeples, and other lofty buildings. It is entirely of a sooty colour with a greenish cast, except that the chin is marked with a white spot.

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The legs are not only very short and small, but of a very singular structure. The toes, which are four in number, are all placed forward, and the least has only one bone, but the rest have three; in which they differ from those of all other birds. The head is large, the mouth extremely wide, and the bill is very small and weak. It is with difficulty that this bird can raise itself from the ground, on account of the length of its wings, and the shortness of its feet; for which reason it generally rests by climbing against some wall or other building, from which it can easily disengage itself.

The swift makes its appearance in this country about fourteen days after the sand-martin; but differs greatly in the time of its departure, always retiring about the middle of August, it being the first of the genus that leaves us.

THE CHINESE SWALLOW.

THIS bird resembles the common swallow in shape, and, in breeding-time, quits the inland parts and goes to the sea side; where it builds an extraordinary

ordinary nest, which is reckoned delicious eating in China. These nests are sometimes preserved as a sweet-meat, and sent over to Europe as a great curiosity. They are composed of a certain clammy glutinous substance, collected from the surface of the sea; and in these the swallow lays its eggs and produces its young. We have no particular discription of this bird, but the Chinese carry on a considerable trade in their nests, and sell them in many parts of the East-Indies. They are about the size of a goose-egg, and of a substance resembling isinglass. It is customary to dissolve one of these nests in broth, and then it is thought preferable to any sauce that can be produced.

THE AMERICAN SWALLOW.

THIS bird, according to Catesby, has the top of the throat of a brownish black, and the extremities of the feathers of the tail are pointed. They quit Virginia and Carolina, and return about the same time of the year as the English swallows. Catesby supposes they pass to the southern parts in the winter,

winter, and that they are properly the Brasil swallow.

THE GOAT SUCKER.

THIS bird is, with great propriety placed by Klein, among the swallow tribe; who calls it a swallow with an undivided tail. It has most of the characters of this genus, such as a very large mouth, a very small bill, and very small legs. It is also a bird of passage, agrees with the swallow tribe in its food, and the manner of taking it; but it differs in the hours of its preying, the goat-sucker flying by night. It feeds on moths, gnats, and chaffers. This bird does not continue long with us; it never makes its appearance here till about the latter end of May, and retires about the middle of August. These birds are often seen in the woody and mountainous parts of Great-Britain; they begin their flight towards the evening, and make a loud and singular noise while they are on the wing. When perched, it has no other note than a small squeak repeated four or five times together. It usually lays two eggs, and sometimes three, on the bare

Male Goatsucker*Female Goatsucker*



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are ground : they are long, slender, and whitish, marbled with reddish brown.

Though the colours of these birds are plain, they have a beautiful effect from the elegance of their disposition, consisting of black, brown, grey, white, and iron colour, disposed in streaks, spots, and bars. The male is distinguished from the female, by an oval white spot near the end of each of the three first quill feathers ; and another on the two outermost feathers of the tail.

The weight of the goat-sucker is two ounces and an half, the length ten inches and an half, and the breadth twenty-two inches. The irides are hazel ; the bill is about one third of an inch long ; the gape of the bill, when opened, is near two inches from tip to tip : the tongue is very small, and placed low in the mouth : the legs are small, scaly, and feathered below the knees. The middle toe is connected to the side on each side, by a small membrane reaching to the first joint : the claw of the middle toe is broad and thin.

THE BLACK CAP.

THIS is one of the smallest of the tribe, and does not weigh above half an ounce. The male is black on the crown of the head, and the hind-part of the neck is of a light ash-colour. The back and coverts of the wings are of a greyish green: the quill feathers and the tail are dusky, edged with dull green: the breast and the upper part of the belly are of a pale ash-colour, and the legs are of a lead-colour. The female is distinguished from the male by the spot on the head, which is that is of a dull rust-colour. This is a bird of passage, leaving us before winter. It sings so finely, that in Norfolk it is called the mock-nightingale. It lays about five eggs of a pale reddish brown, mottled with a deeper shade, and sprinkled with a few dark spots.

THE PETTY CHAPS.

THIS bird is not quite so large as the linnet: the bill is black; the head, neck, back, wings, and tail are all coloured inclining to green: the quill

feathers are of a mouse-colour, edged with green. The inner coverts of the wings are yellow. The lower parts are all white, or of a silver colour; except the breast, which is darker, and has a yellowish cast. The inside of the mouth is red, and the legs are of a lead-colour. This bird is found principally in Yorkshire, and Italy; and among the Italians it is called the beccafigo.

THE FLY-CATCHER.

THE weight of this bird is about twelve drams: it has an oblong bill, of a reddish tawny colour: its head is of a deep brown, mixed with ash-colour, and the cheeks are marked with long spots of a dirty-white. The back and coverts of the wings are dusky, edged with reddish brown. The bill feathers and the tail are dusky: the rump is brown, tinged with green: the throat and the breast are of a dull ash-colour; the belly is of a dirty white; and the sides, thighs, and vent feathers are of a pale tawny brown. The legs and feet are of a dark ash-colour. This bird frequents low hedges, particularly in gardens. It

64 *The* HEDGE-SPARROW.

builds its nest in a small bush, and lays four or five eggs of a fine pale blue colour. The male has a short, and very sweet note, but only during a few months in the spring.

THE BLUE FLY-CATCHER.

THE bill of this bird is black; the crown of the head, the back part of the neck, the back, rump, and covert feathers of the wings are blue, inclining to slate colour; the tail, and quill feathers of the wings are dusky, but the outer quills are white at the bottom: the throat, and sides of the head are black, and the same colour extends from each side of the neck to the wings; the covert feathers under the tail are entirely white, and the legs and feet are a dusky brown colour. It is a native of America, and probably a bird of passage.

THE HEDGE-SPARROW.

THE weight of this bird is about twelve drams: its head is of a deep brown, mixed with ash-colour, and the cheeks are marked with oblong spots of dirty white: the back and

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coverts of the wings are dusky, edged with reddish brown; the quill feathers and the tail are dusky; and the rump is brown, tinged with green. The throat and breast are of a dull ash-colour, and the belly is of a dirty white. The sides, thighs, and vent feathers are of a pale tawny brown. The legs are of a dull flesh-colour. This bird is as well known as any of our small birds, and it builds so conspicuously in small bushes, that any boy who searches the hedges, can give an account of its nest, eggs, &c. It lays four or five eggs, of a fine pale blue-colour. The male has a short, but very sweet note during a very small space in the spring. Linnæus seems to have been unacquainted with this species: the bird which he supposes to be our hedge-sparrow, and describes under the title of *motacilla curruca*, differs in colours of plumage as well as eggs. The hedge-sparrow ought to be more esteemed, as he has a variety of agreeable notes: many persons, who have kept them in cages, have been much delighted with their singing; but these birds are less valued on account of their being so exceeding plenty, as we

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perceive by daily experience, with regard to many other articles of convenience or pleasure. The hen is known from the cock by a fainter breast, and by being of a brighter colour on the back. The nest of the hedge-sparrow consists of fine green moss, plaited with a little wool and hair. The female has young ones at the end of April or the beginning of May. The young should be taken at nine or ten days old and fed with bread and flesh-meat chopped very fine, mixed together, and made moist. If the cock hedge-sparrow is brought up under some fine song bird, he will take his song, and give great satisfaction : this bird has a long slender black bill, with a horny clove tongue, and black at the tip. The iris of the eyes is hazel, and the ears are wide

THE WREN.

THE wren weighs about three drams and is four inches and an half in length from the tip of the bill to the end of the tail. The head and upper-part of the body is of a deep reddish brown and above each eye is a stroke of white. The back, the coverts of the wings, and the tail, are marked with slender transverse

verse black lines ; and the quill feathers with bars of black and red. The throat is of a yellowish white. The belly and sides are crossed with dusky and pale reddish brown lines. The tail is crossed with dusky bars. The wren may be placed among the finest of our singing birds, though its note continues only during the breeding season. It makes a curious nest of an oval shape, very deep, and with a small hole in the middle for egress and regress : the external part consists chiefly of moss, but it is lined with hair and feathers : this bird lays a great number of eggs, generally from twelve to eighteen : they are white, sprinkled all over with pale reddish spots. Mr. Ray observes, that it is one of those daily miracles which we take no notice of, that a wren should produce so many young, and feed them all without passing over a single one, and that too in total darkness. The wren breeds twice a year, namely in April and June, and the young should be fed and reared like young nightingales.

The wren usually creeps about hedges and holes, making but short flights, and, if it be driven from the hedges, may be easily tired and run down.

THE

THE WILLOW-WREN.

THE weight of the willow-wren is about two drams: the upper-part of the body is of a dusky green: the wings and tail are brown, edged with yellowish green. There is a yellowish stroke above each eye: the breast, belly, and thighs vary in their colour in different birds; they are of a bright yellow in some, and almost white in others. It builds in hollows in the sides of ditches, and makes its nest in the form of an egg, with a large hole at the top as an entrance: the outside consists of moss and hay, and the inside is lined with soft feathers. It usually lays seven eggs, which are white marked with rust-coloured spots. It has a low plaintive note, and is perpetually creeping up and down the bodies and boughs of trees. It frequents large moist woods, and those places where willow trees abound.

THE GOLDEN CRESTED WREN.

THIS is the smallest of all the British birds, not weighing above twenty-

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fix grains. It is about three inches and an half in length, and five inches in breadth : it is distinguishable from all other birds, not only by its size, but by the beautiful scarlet mark on the head, bounded by a fine yellow line on each side. The bill is dusky ; the feathers of the forehead are green ; and a narrow white line extends from the bill to the eyes : the hind-part of the neck and the back are of a dullish green : the coverts of the wings are dusky, edged with green, and tipped with white. The quill feathers and the tail are dusky, edged with pale green. The throat and belly are white, tinged with green : the legs are of a dull yellow, and the claws are very long. It frequents woods, and is usually seen in oak-trees. Though so very small a bird, it endures our winters. The note of this wren, does not differ greatly from that of the common wren.

THE RUBY-CROWNED WREN.

THIS is a native of North-America, particularly of Pennsylvania. The bill is black : the head, back-part of the neck, back, and rump are of a darkish olive-

olive-green; but deeper on the head, and lighter on the rump. It has a spot of exceeding fine red, or ruby colour, on the top of the head, from whence this bird has its name: the breast and belly are of a lightish yellow, or cream-colour. The covert feathers of the wings are of an olive-colour with cream-coloured tips; forming two lines across each wing: the three quills next the back are dusky, edged with cream-colour; the remainder of the quills are also dusky, with narrow greenish yellow edges. The feathers of the tail are blackish, edged with yellowish green, but they are of an ash-colour beneath. The legs, feet, and claws are dusky.

THE CARIBBEE WREN.

THIS is a native of the Caribbee islands in America, where, on account of its delightful note, it is called a nightingale. It is larger than the common wren, and is the more remarkable for having a fine song in a country where the birds in general have very disagreeable notes.

THE

THE WHEAT-EAR.

THE head and back of the male wheat-ear, are of a light grey, tinged with red; and over each eye passes a white line; beneath which a broad black stroke passes each eye to the hind-part of the head: the rump, and lower half of the tail are white, and the upper half is black; the breast and belly are white, tinged with yellow: the quill-feathers are black, edged with reddish brown. The colours of the female are duller, and she wants the black stroke across the eyes. The wheat-ear disappears in September. This bird has its name, in Suffex, from its frequenting the downs in that country in the time of harvest.

These birds begin to visit us about the middle of March, and continue coming till the beginning of May; it being very remarkable that the females arrive about a fortnight before the males. They frequent warrens, downs, and the edges of hills, especially those that are fenced with stone-walls. They breed in cliffs, in old rabbit-burroughs, and sometimes under old timber; making

ing their nest of dried grass and horse-hair; and laying from six to eight eggs of a light blue colour. They grow very fat in autumn, and are thought so great a delicacy as to be little inferior to an ortolan. They are taken in great quantities by the shepherds about East-Bourne, in Suffex; for which purpose they make snares of horse-hair, and place them under a turf. Wheat-ears are such very timid birds, that the motion of a cloud, or the appearance of a hawk, will drive them into those traps for shelter, by which means they are taken. The reason that these birds frequent the neighbourhood of East-Bourne, is because it abounds with a certain fly which are very numerous about the adjacent hills; drawn thither by the wild tyme with which they are covered, which is not only a favourite food of that insect, but the plant on which it deposits its eggs.

Wheat-ears abound in many other parts of Suffex, as well as in the neighbourhood of East-Bourne. In the downs not far distant from Brighthelmstone, Shoreham, and Arundel, they are found in great numbers; and, during the watering-season at Brighthelmstone

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stone, the ladies and gentlemen, in their perambulations, frequently find birds in snares that have been laid by the shepherds; which they always take, and deposit a penny in the hole for every bird, as a valuable consideration. This indeed is the settled price, between the shepherds and the nobility and gentry who frequent Brighthelmstone.

THE WHIN CHAT.

THE head and back of this bird are a pale reddish brown, regularly spotted with black: it has a narrow white streak over each eye, and beneath that a broad bed of black, which extends from the bill to the hind-part of the head: the breast is of a reddish yellow; the belly is whitish, with a reddish tincture, and there are two remarkable white spots on each wing: the lower-part of the tail is white, the middle feathers excepted, which are wholly black; and the upper-part the others are of the same colour. The colours of the female are not so agreeable. Instead of the white and black marks on the cheeks, she has one pale brown one, and she has less

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white in the wings than the male. The bill, feet, and claws of the whinchat are black. This is a bird of passage, but it is not certain whether it quits this island.

THE STONE CHATTER.

THIS is also a bird of passage; but it is doubted whether it quits this island. Naturalists in general suppose it only shifts its quarters, and does not entirely leave this country. It is a restless noisy bird, and frequently perches upon some bush, chattering incessantly. The head, neck, and throat are black; but the latter has a white bar on each side, and seems, at first sight, to be encircled with white: the feathers on the back are black, edged with tawny; but the sides just above the rump are white: the breast is of a deep reddish yellow, and the belly somewhat lighter; the quill feathers are dusky, edged with a dull red. The head of the female is of an iron-colour spotted with black; and the colours in general are less vivid. The legs in both sexes are black.

THE

THE WHITE THROAT.

THIS bird is about the size of a linnet, but the body is somewhat longer. The upper-part of the bill is blackish, the lower whitish, and the inside of the mouth is yellow. The head is of a brownish ash-colour, and the throat white: the breast and belly of the male are white, tinged with red; those of the female wholly white. The back and coverts of the wings of both are of an iron-colour; the quill feathers and the tail are dusky, edged with reddish brown. The legs are of a yellowish brown.

The white throat frequents our gardens in summer, and leaves us when winter approaches. It builds near the ground in low bushes; the external part of its nest consists of tender stalks of herbs and dry straw; the middle-part of fine bents and soft grass; and the inside of hair. It lays about five eggs, which are of a whitish green colour, sprinkled with black spots.

THE WHITE WATER
WAGTAIL.

ALL the birds of this kind have a very long tail, which is always in motion; on which account they have obtained the name. The white water wagtail weighs about six drams, and is in length from the tip of the bill to the end of the tail, eight inches; but the breadth, when the wings are extended, is eleven inches. The head, back, and neck, as far as the breast are black: in some the chin is white, and the throat marked with a black crescent. The breast and belly are white; the quill feathers are dusky, and the coverts are black, tipped and edged with white. The tail is very long, and continually in motion. The exterior feather on each side is white, the lower-part of the inner-web excepted, which is dusky: the others are black. The bill, the inside of the mouth, and the legs are black. The back claw is remarkably long.

The white water-wagtail frequents the sides of ponds and small streams feeding on insects and worms like the

rest of this genus. This bird shifts its quarters in the winter, directing its course from the north to the south of England during that season. In spring and autumn this bird is a constant attendant of the plough, in pursuit of the worms thrown up by that instrument. In some places they build their nests under the eaves of houses, and in holes of the walls of buildings, and lay four or five eggs.

THE YELLOW WATER
WAGTAIL.

THIS bird has a straight sharp-pointed black bill, except at the base of the lower-chap, which inclines to a flesh-colour. The iris of the eyes is hazel. The top of the head, the upper-part of the neck, and the back, are flesh-coloured, slightly edged with yellowish green. The male is a bird of great beauty, the breast, belly, and thighs being of a most vivid and beautiful yellow: the throat is marked with some large black spots. It has a bright yellow line above the eye, and another beneath that of a dusky hue, from the bill across the eye; and beneath the

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eye it has a third of the same colour. The head, the upper-part of the neck, and the back, is of an olive-green, which brightens in the coverts of the tail. The colours of the female are more obscure than those of the male, and it wants those black spots on the throat. The legs and feet are of a dusky-colour, and the claw of the hind-toe is pretty long. It makes its nest upon the ground among corn, bents, and stalks of herbs; the inside of which is lined with hair. This bird lays four or five eggs, variegated with dusky spots, and lines irregularly drawn.

THE GREY WATER WAGTAIL.

IT has a slender straight bill, of a dusky-colour, and ending in a point. The top of the head, the upper-part of the neck, and the back, are ash-coloured: the space round each eye is ash-coloured; beneath and above which is a line of white. In the male, the chin and throat are black; the feathers incumbent on the tail are yellow; and the tail is longer in proportion to its size than that of any other kind. The breast and the whole under-side of the body are yellow.

The WATER-WAGTAIL. 79

yellow : the quill feathers are dusky, those next the back being edged with yellow. In the female, the black spot on the throat is wanting, and the colours in general are more obscure than in the male. The legs, feet, and claws of this bird are of a dusky-colour : it frequents stony rivers, and feeds upon insects.

THE JAMAICA WATER WAGTAIL.

IT has a small head, and a straight black bill, with a bluish cast towards the base : the head, and lower-part of the neck is black, but the upper part is yellow. The whole of the back, breast, and lower-part of the belly are also yellow. The wings are black, with a white spot in the middle ; the tail also is black, and the feet are brown. The tail of this bird is near four inches long, which, together with the colour of the feathers, occasioned Mr. Ray to place it among the wag-tails ; but Marcgrave says it neither feeds nor wags its tail like the birds of this kind abovementioned.

THE

THE GROSSEBEAK.

THIS bird is also called a hawfinch; it is seven inches in length, and thirteen in breadth, and weighs almost two ounces : the bill is in shape like a funnel, strong, thick, and of a dull pale pink colour ; at the base of which are some orange-coloured feathers : the irides are grey ; and the cheeks, and the crown of the head are of a fine deep bay : a black line extends from the bill to the eyes ; the breast and belly are of a dirty flesh-colour. The neck is ash-coloured, and the back and coverts of the wings of a deep brown ; those of the tail being of a yellowish bay : the great quill feathers are black, spotted with white on their inner webs. The tail is short, having white spots on the inner-sides, and the legs are of a flesh-colour. The great peculiarity of this bird, is the form of the ends of the middle quill feathers ; which resembles, as Mr. Edwards properly observes, the figure of some of the ancient battle-axes. These feathers are glossed over with a rich blue ; but are less conspicuous

cious in the female; her head being of a dull olive, tinged with brown.

The grosbeak is not regularly migrant, visiting us only in hard winters: they feed on berries, and even on the kernels of the strongest stones, such as those of cherries and almonds, which they crack with the utmost ease; their bills, from their strength and thickness, being well adapted to that work. We are told by Mr. Willoughby, that these birds are common in Italy and Germany, where they live in the woods in summer, and breed in hollow-trees, laying five or six eggs; but that they come down into the plains in winter. Their legs and feet are of a pale flesh-colour, and the claws are pretty strong and large.

THE GAMBIA GROSSBEAK.

THIS bird is about the size of the hawfinch; the bill is large, and broad at the base, ending in a sharp point, and resembling the figure of a cone. The mouth, which is large, is of an ash-colour in the inside. The pupils of the eyes are black, surrounded with a white iris; the head, and the greatest part

part of the neck are black ; ending in a circular black point on the fore-part of the breast. The rest of the body, and the wings and tail, are of a beautiful yellow, shaded with a bright green. The legs and feet are of an ash-colour, with a bluish gloss. These birds abound on the coast of Guinea, in Africa, near the river Gambia.

THE PURPLE GROSSBEAK.

THIS is about the size of a sparrow : it has streaks of red over the eyes, on the throat, and near the vent under the tail : all the rest of the body is of a deep purple. The hen has the same red streaks, but the body is brown. This is a native of the Bahama islands.

THE CROSS-BILL.

THE cross-bill is an inconstant visitant of this island : Gesner informs us that in Germany and Switzerland, it inhabits the pine-forests*, and breeds in the pine-trees so early as the months of January and February. These birds

* Gesner, 59.

feed on the seeds of the cones of pines and firs, and are very dexterous in scaling them; for which purpose the cross structure of the lower mandible of their bill is admirably adapted. They also feed on hemp-feed, and the kernels of apples, and are said to divide an apple with one stroke of the bill, to get at the contents: it is certain that these birds change their colours, or rather the shades of their colours: the males which are red, varying at certain seasons to deep red, to orange, or to a kind of a yellow. The females, which are green, alter to different varieties of the same colour. There are two varieties of this bird, one being considerably smaller than the other: the lesser and are the most common.

THE BULL-FINCH.

BULL-FINCHES are so called from their heads, which are black, and, in proportion to their bodies, large. In some parts of England they are called peeps, in others thick-bills, and in others hoops. They are very docile birds, the hen learning after the pipe or whistle as well as the cock; but its own wild

wild note is not in the least musical. They excel most birds, however, in what is taught them, and they are remarkable for not forgetting what they have once learned, though they should be placed among several other singing-birds, in the same room. Some have been taught to speak several words at command, with great propriety of articulation. They are deservedly esteemed, both for their song, and the beauty of their figure. In the latter they equal any male birds; and in the former, if properly instructed, they excel them. A gentleman in Lancashire had one that could whistle several tunes; and was so well disciplined, that it would obey its master's call, and perch on his shoulders; and, when commanded, go through a difficult musical lesson. Many which are taught to speak, are annually brought from Frankfurt on the Maine to London, in order to be sold to the best advantage.

The male is distinguished from the female, by the superior blackness of its crown, and by the rich crimson that adorns the cheeks, breast, belly, and throat; those of the female being of a dirty buff-colour: the

bill is short, black, and strong; the eyes are of a hazel-colour, and the head (as already observed) is large in proportion to the size of the body. Part of the neck, shoulders, and back are of a bluish ash-colour, shaded with red, and the belly and rump are white. Some of the quill feathers have their outward webs red, and the inner of a fine glossy black: others are black, with dusky edges, and of a bluish gloss; and others have their outward edges white, forming a sort of white line or cross-bar upon each wing. The tail is of a shining black, and about two inches long; the legs are of a dusky colour, and the claws are black.

Among young bull-finches it is difficult to discover the cock from the hen: the most certain method to come at a discovery, is to pull off a few feathers from their breasts when they are about three weeks old, and in about ten or twelve days after, fresh feathers will appear where you have pulled off the others: if they are of a curious red, it is a cock; but if they are of a palish brown, it is a hen.

In the spring these birds frequent our gardens, and feed upon the tender buds

of fruit-trees, such as the apple, pear, peach, and other garden-trees. They breed about the latter end of May, or the beginning of June, at which time they are seldom seen near the houses; always choosing some retired place to breed in. Their nests, which are usually built in forests, woods, or parks, are very difficult to be found; and, when they are seen, they are of so wretched a fabric, that they would not be taken for nests, except by those who are connoisseurs in the nestling of birds. They are composed of a few small sticks placed across each other in a very slovenly manner, and lined with a few fibrous roots. The female lays four or five eggs of a bluish colour, spotted at the largest end with large dark brown, and faint reddish spots.

Young bull-finches should not be taken till they are pretty well feathered; that is when they are twelve or fourteen days old. They should be kept warm and clean; and fed every two hours from morning till night; but they must have but little at a time. Their food should be rape-seed, soaked in water eight or ten hours, and then scalded and bruised: this should be

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mixed with an equal quantity of white bread soaked in water, strained, and afterwards boiled thick with milk. It should be fresh every day, for if it is sour, it will do the birds an injury.

The bull-finch is about the size of the common sparrow. It is so pernicious to fruit-trees, by destroying their tender buds, that in some parts of England a reward is given by the churchwardens for every one that is killed. This may be assigned as one reason of their scarcity; for they are certainly less common than most other singing-birds that breed among us.

THE SPARROW.

THIS is usually called the house-sparrow. It has a very thick strong bill, about half an inch in length, and the eyes are of a hazel-colour. The crown of the head is grey, and under each eye is a black spot; and above the corner of each is a broad bright bay mark, which surrounds the hind-part of the head. The cheeks are white, the chin and under-side of the neck are black, the latter being edged with white; and the belly is of a dirty

white: the back is spotted with red and black, and the tail is dusky. The lower mandible of the bill of the female is white. But this bird is so universally known that it would be impertinent to give any farther description. It is six inches and an half in length, from the tip of the bill to the end of the tail, and weighs somewhat more than an ounce. It feeds upon grain, and does considerable mischief in the corn-fields.

Sparrows, which are very numerous in this country, are proverbially salacious, and consequently very short-lived birds. They breed early in the spring, making their nests under the eaves of houses, in thatches, in holes of walls, and frequently in the nests of the martin, after expelling the owner. Linnæus tells us (upon the authority of Albertus Magnus) that the martin does not suffer this insult to pass unrevenged; the injured bird assembles its companions, who assist him in plaistering up the entrance with dirt; after which they fly away twittering in triumph, leaving the intruder to perish in his muddy prison.

THE BLACK SPARROW.

THIS is about the size of a lark, and has a thick short beak. The iris of the eyes are red. The head, neck, breast, back, and tail are black, but the wing-feathers are edged with white. The breast and belly are white in the middle, on the sides, and lower-parts : the upper part of the wings are of a dark red, and the legs are brown.

THE AMERICAN SPARROW.

THE back of this bird is of a curious black, the belly white, the head and breast of a fine blue, and the wings and tail of a shining black, with a purple cast. The rump is of a deep green. One of these was sent here from the island of Barbadoes.

THE GOOD-HOPE SPARROW.

THIS is a native of the Cape of Good-Hope, and has a bill of a palish brown, which is not so strong as in other birds of this kind : the iris of the eyes is of a pale yellowish white ;

and the upper-part of the body, the head, and neck are black ; which colour terminates in a point upon the belly ; the lower-part of which, as well as the thighs, and the fore-part of the wings being white. The sides of the wings are of a light brown, and some of the quill feathers are black. The colour of the tail is the same as that of the wings, and the legs and feet are of a dusky brown,

There is also a bird called the White Lapland Sparrow of Linnæus, which is of the size of a lark, and generally weighs about an ounce. Its bill is sharp, conical, and black, though of an ash-colour towards the base ; but it is principally remarkable for having teeth on each side of the palate, at the orifice of the throat.

The Chinese sparrow is less than the house-sparrow, but has no remarkable distinction.

The Little Bahama sparrow is of the size of a Canary-bird, and the head, neck, and breast are black ; all the other parts being of a dirty green.

The Mountain Sparrow is of the size of the common sparrow, but some-
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what longer. It is found in mountainous woody places, but is rather an uncommon bird.

The Wood-Sparrow is of a rusty iron-colour on the crown of the head, and has a white space about the eyes. It has also blackish transverse lines running along the chin, and the lower-part of the neck.

THE GREEN-FINCH.

THE green-finch is somewhat larger than the common sparrow: the head and back are of a yellowish green. The upper-chap of the bill is of a dusky-colour, and the lower whitish. The rump is of a fine yellow, but the breast is paler, and shaded with green: the belly is white. The edges of the outmost quill feathers are yellow, the next green, and the farthest grey. The tail is about two inches long, and a little forked: the two middle feathers are dusky; and the exterior webs of the four outmost feathers on both sides the tail are yellow. The colours of the female are much less vivid than in the male.

These

These birds are very common in this country. They have young ones about the middle of May : they make their nests in hedges, which are very large considering the size of the inhabitants; the outside of which consists of hay, stubble, and grass, the middle-part of moss, and the inside of feathers, wool, and hair. The female lays five or six eggs, of a pale green-colour, sprinkled with small reddish spots, which are more numerous at the large end. The green-finch, from the end of the bill to the extremity of the tail, is about six inches and an half, the bill is half an inch in length, and the weight of the bird is sixteen drams.

Though green-finches are frequently kept in cages, they are not much esteemed for their singing : yet some of them, if brought up from the nest, will learn to pipe and whistle, and to imitate the song of most other birds. They are valued by some for their facility in learning to ring the bells in a cage contrived for that purpose. At the beginning of winter, and in hard weather, they assemble in flocks, and may be caught with the clap-nets in great numbers. The young are fit to be

be taken at ten days old. The green-finch is very easily tamed.

THE GOLD-FINCH.

THE gold-finch is a little less than the house-sparrow, weighing about half an ounce ; and its length, from the tip of the bill to the end of the tail, is five inches and an half : the breadth, when the wings are extended, is nine inches. It is one of the most beautiful of the hard-billed small birds, whether we consider its colours, the elegance of its form, or the music of its note. The bill is white, tipped with black, the base being surrounded with a ring of rich scarlet feathers : a black line extends from the corners of the mouth to the eyes : the cheeks are white, and from the top of the head a broad black line passes on each side almost to the neck. The hind-part of the head is white : the back, rump, and breast are of a fine pale tawny brown, rather lighter on the two latter. The belly is white, and the wings and tail black, but the points of the chief feathers are white on both : a beautiful yellow stripe runs across the wings. The tail is about
two

two inches long, and of a black-colour, but often the feathers are inarked with a white spot near their ends. The legs are white.

The cock is distinguished from the hen by the feathers on the ridges of the wings, which are of a deep black, and those of the hen are of a dusky brown: the black and yellow in the wings of the female are also less brilliant than in those of the male. The young bird, before it moults, is grey on the head, and is therefore termed a *grey-pate* by the bird-catchers.

The gold-finch begins to build in April, when the fruit-trees are in blossom. As they excel the other small birds in beauty of feathers, so do they likewise in ingenuity: their nest is small, but extremely beautiful: the outside consists of very fine moss, curiously interwoven with other materials, and the inside is lined with fine down, which has the appearance of cotton. The gold-finch lays five or six white eggs, marked with deep purple spots on the upper-end. This bird is fond of orchards, and frequently builds its nest in an apple or pear-tree.

Gold-finches are of a mild and gentle nature, and almost as soon as they are taken are easily prevailed on to eat and drink; nor are they so much affrighted at the presence of man as birds are in general. They are also soon reconciled to their imprisonment in a cage; and after they have remained there a considerable time, they become so fond of it, that if the door of the cage is opened they will not fly away, but usually fly to the cage for shelter if any thing should terrify them.

In some parts of England they are called *draw-waters*, from their facility in learning to draw their water when they are inclined to drink; for which purpose they are sometimes furnished with a little ivory-bucket, fastened to a small chain. It is entertaining to see with what dexterity these little creatures pull up their bucket, drink, and return it. They are much delighted with viewing themselves in a looking-glass, which is sometimes fixed to the back of their bucket-board. They will sit upon their perch, pruning and dressing themselves with the greatest care imaginable, looking incessantly in the

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the glass to see that every feather is placed in the nicest order.

The gold-finch is a long-lived bird, and sometimes reaches the age of twenty years : Mr. Willoughby mentions one that lived twenty-three years. Towards winter these birds assemble in flocks, and feed on seeds of different kinds, particularly those of the thistle. Their note is very sweet, and they are much esteemed on that account, as well as for their beauty, and their great docility.

The young are tender, and therefore should not be taken out of their nests till they are pretty well feathered. If a young gold-finch is brought up under a Canary bird, a wood-lark, or any other singing bird, he will readily take their song. A cock gold-finch, bred from the nest, will couple with a hen Canary bird, and their eggs will produce birds between both kinds ; partaking of the song and colours of both ; but the young will be barren.

There is an American bird called the American gold-finch, by Catesby : it is black on the forehead, and about the eyes ; the wings are of an earthy colour, edged with straw-colour, and fringed.

tinged. The tail is black, with a yellowish cast, and the other parts are yellow.

THE CHAFFINCH.

THE chaffinch is a hardy well-known bird, and about the size of the bull-finch. It entertains us agreeably with its song very early in the year; but, towards the latter end of summer, assumes a chirping note. Its nest is almost as elegantly constructed as that of the gold-finch, and nearly of the same materials, except that the inside is lined with feathers and hair instead of down. It lays four or five eggs of whitish colour, tinged and spotted with deep purple.

This bird is lavish in its song, and, when brought up from the nest, will sing six or seven months in the year; but in its wild state not above three months.

It has a strong bill of a pale blue-colour, and black at the tip, as well as at the upper-part: the crown of the head, the hind-part and the sides of the neck are of a bluish grey; the breast is red; the sides and belly are white, tinged with

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with red; the upper-part of the back is of a deep tawny colour; the lower-part, and rump, are green. The colours are much stronger, and more lively in the male than in the female; and some of the quill-feathers have white webs, with green edges, shaded with yellow: the small feathers on the ridges of the wings are blue, spotted with white. The tail is black, except the outmost feather, which is marked obliquely with a white line from top to bottom; and the next, which has a white spot on the end of the inner-web. The legs are dusky. The female wants the red on the breast, and other parts: the head and upper-part of her body are of a dirty green; and the belly and breast of a dirty white.

The young of the chaffinch may be taken at about ten days old, for as they are hardy birds, they are easily brought up. Some bird-catchers, not satisfied with depriving the little innocent creatures of their liberty, exercise the cruelty of putting out the eyes of the chaffinch, because they say he is then more attentive, and learns more expeditiously: this wicked experiment is done with a wire made almost red-hot

hot. It is however affirmed that this cruel operation answers no other purpose than that of rendering the operator detestable, for rewarding the bird's endeavours to please him, with temporary torture and perpetual blindness.

It is very singular that in Sweden, the female chaffinches quit that country in September, migrating in flocks into Holland, and leaving their mates behind *.

THE BRAMBLING.

THIS is a common bird in this country, but is chiefly found in the woody parts: it is larger than the chaffinch; the top of the head is of a glossy black, edged with a yellowish-brown; the feathers on the back are of the same colour, but the edges are more deeply bordered with brown; the chin, throat, and breast, are of an orange-colour: the lesser coverts of the wings are of the same colour; but those on the quill-feathers are barred with black, and tipped with

* *Amzn. Acad. ii. 42. iv. 595.*

orange. The tail is a little forked, and the exterior web of the outer-feather white : the others are black, except the two middle ones, which are edged and tipped with ash-colour,

THE SISKIN.

THE head of this bird is black, and the upper-part of the body green, except that the shafts of the feathers on the back are blackish. The rump is of a yellowish green, but the throat and breast are paler. The belly is white, and the feathers under the tail are yellowish, with oblong brown spots ; the wings are marked with a transverse spot of a yellowish-colour. The two middle feathers of the tail are black ; the rest above half-way are of a most beautiful yellow with black tips. The colours of the female are paler ; her throat and sides are white spotted with brown ; and her head and back are of a greenish ash-colour, marked also with brown.

We are told by Mr. Willoughby that this is a song-bird, and that in Suffex it is called the barley-bird, because it visits them in the barley-feed time. The siskin does not breed in these islands.

lands, but comes hither in autumn and departs in the spring. It feeds in the same manner as gold-finches and linnets, and is frequently seen upon elder trees. It is to be met with in the bird-shops in London, and being rather a scarce bird, sells at a higher price than the merit of its song deserves.

THE LINNET.

THE length of this bird, including bill and tail, is five inches and an half; of which the former is half an inch, and the latter two inches and a quarter. It weighs about ten drams. The bill is dusky, but in spring it assumes a bluish-cast: it is thick, strong, and about half an inch in length: the head is variegated, with ash-colour and black, and the back is of a blackish red; the bottom of the breast is of a fine red, and the lower-part of the belly yellowish. The lower-part of the throat is of a beautiful red, and the edges of its feathers of a yellowish red: the tail is a little forked, and of a brown-colour, edged with white, the two middle feathers excepted, which are bordered with a dullish red. These

birds are much esteemed for their song; they feed on seeds of different kinds, which they peel before they eat: the seed of the *linum* or flax is their favourite; from whence arose the name of the linnet tribe.

They usually build in a thick bush or hedge, particularly among white thorn or furze. The outside of their nests is composed of moss, bents, and dry weeds; the inside of fine soft wool or cotton, mixed with a kind of down, gathered from dried plants, and a few horse-hairs. They lay four or five whitish eggs, spotted like those of the goldfinch. The young ones are hatched about the latter end of April, or the beginning of May, which may be taken when they are about ten days old. They must be kept very warm, and fed every two hours, from six in the morning till six or seven in the evening.

The cock may be known from the hen by the feathers on his back, which are much browner than those of the hen; and by the white of his wings: to examine which, when the wing-feathers are grown, one of the wings must be stretched out, while the body

of the bird is held fast with the other hand ; and then the white must be observed upon three or four feathers : if it appears bright and clear, and extends to the wings, it is a certain sign of its being a cock ; the white in the wing of the hen being much less and fainter.

The linnet may be taught to pipe or whistle, and is easily instructed in the song of any other fine bird ; but as its own note is so very fine, that trouble is unnecessary ; the natural note of any fine singing-bird being always to be preferred.

Linnetts may be taken with clap-nets in the months of June, July, and August ; but flight birds are the most plentiful about the beginning of October. The nets should be placed near the spot where they are accustomed to eat or drink.

THE GREATER RED-HEADED LINNET, OR REDPOLE.

THIS bird is smaller than the former, and has a bill like that of a chaffinch : the head is ash-colour, except that it has a blood-coloured spot on the forehead. The breast is tinged with a fine rose-

rose-colour. The neck is of an ash-colour: the back, scapular feathers, and coverts of the wings are of a bright reddish brown; the sides are yellow, and the middle of the belly white. The tail, like that of the former, is forked, and of a dusky-colour, edged on both sides with white. The head of the female is ash-colour, spotted with black: the back and scapulars are of a dull brownish red; and the breast and sides of a dirty yellow, streaked with dusky lines.

This is a familiar bird, and is as chearful five minutes after it is caught, as a French prisoner is said to be after the same short captivity. It has a pretty chattering kind of song, and is often kept in cages. It should be fed with the same sort of seeds as the common linnet or chaffinch. These birds are frequent on our sea-coasts, and, in flight-time, are often taken near London.

THE LESSER RED-HEADED LINNET.

THIS is the least of the linnets, not exceeding half the size of the preceding.

ing. These are also distinguished from the last species by the bill being smaller and sharper ; by both sexes having the spot on the head ; by the legs and feet being dusky ; and by their assembling in flocks, which the others do not : Mr. Pennant mentions his having seen the nest of this species on an alder-stump near a brook, between two and three feet from the ground. The outside consisted of dried stalks of grass and other plants, mixed with a small quantity of wool ; and the lining was composed of hair and feathers : the bird was sitting on four eggs of a pale bluish green, thickly sprinkled near the blunt end with small reddish spots. The bird, continues he, was so tenacious of her nest, as to suffer us to take her off with our hand, and we found, that, after we had released her, she would not forsake it.

THE TWITE OR MOUNTAIN
LINNET.

THIS is rather inferior in size to the common linnnet, and is therefore called by Brisson *La petite linotte*, or little linnnet. In shape and colour, however, it does

does not materially differ from the common linnet. Its bill is short and yellow, and above and below each eye there is a pale brown spot. The male has a curious red spot on the rump, which the female has not. This bird takes its name from its note, which has very little music in it : it is a familiar bird, and more easily tamed than the common linnet. This bird is taken in the flight-season near London, with the linnets, and is there called a twite. It does not breed in England, but comes there in the winter : it will feed on rape and Canary-feed, but gives the preference to the latter. It is common in some parts of France, where it lays eggs resembling those of a linnet, but smaller.

THE BUNTING.

THIS bird is larger than the common lark, but not very different in colour. It weighs an ounce and an half, and is about seven inches and an half, from the tip of the bill to the end of the claws. The bill of this bird, and the other species of this genus, is singularly

The YELLOW-HAMMER. 107

constructed; the sides of the upper-chap form a sharp-angle, bending inwards towards the lower; and in the roof of the former is a hard knob, fitted for bruising corn or other hard seeds. This bird is somewhat more of a brick-colour than the lark, and its chin, breast, and belly, are of a yellowish white. - The throat is marked with oblong black spots, and the tail is about three inches long, and of a dusky red. The legs and claws are of a dusky colour.

THE YELLOW-HAMMER.

THE yellow-hammer is about the size of a chaffinch, or rather larger. It is six inches and an half in length, from the tip of the bill to the end of the tail, and weighs about ten drams. The bill is of a dusky hue, and the crown of the head of a pale yellow; spotted with brown in some, and plain in others: the hind-part of the neck is edged with green; the chin and throat are yellow; and the breast is marked with an orange red: the belly is yellow, and the lesser coverts of the wings are green; the others are dusky, edged with

with rust-colour: and the back is of the same colours. The quill-feathers of the wings are dusky, some of which are edged with green, and others with a dirty white. The tail, which is about three inches long, is a little forked at the end; the edges of some of the feathers being green, and some marked with white spots near the tips. The feet are of a light brown, and the claws are black.

It makes a flat nest on the ground on the sides of banks or hedges, and generally under a bush; but sometimes near a river or brook. Its nest is composed of moss, dried roots of grass, weeds, and horse-hair intermixed. It lays six or seven white eggs, veined with a dark purple. The young ones are usually fit to be taken by the beginning of May, but they should remain in the nest till they are ten or twelve days old. This is a very common species, and in the winter frequents farm-yards with other small birds.

The male, in a wild state, sings very prettily; and though it is seldom kept in a cage, yet makes no contemptible figure there; for, exclusive of its song,
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is fine feathers are some recommenda-
on.

The female is of a duller colour all
over the body than the male, and
those parts which are of a fine yellow
in the latter, are of a dirty green in the
former.

THE REED-SPARROW.

THIS bird is about the size of a
chaffinch; the length is six inches and
a half, and the breadth ten inches: it
has a short black bill, the edges of
which are turned a little inwards; so
that the tongue lies buried in a small
pocket like a funnel. The head, chin,
and throat of the male are black; and
at each corner of the mouth a white
line commences, which encircles the
head. The back, covert feathers of
the wings, and the scapular feathers,
are black, deeply bordered with red.
The belly is white; the two middle
feathers of the tail are black, bordered
with red, and the three next are wholly
black. The exterior web, and part of
the interior of the outermost-feather is
white. The head of the female is rust-
colour,

colour, spotted with black, and she wants the white ring round the neck.

This bird frequents the sides of rivers and marshy-places, and delights in being among reeds, from whence it takes its name. The situation of its nest is remarkably contrived: it is fastened to four reeds, and suspended like a hammock about three feet above the water; the materials of which the nest consists are decayed rushes, fine bents, and hairs. The reed-sparrow lays four eggs of a pale blue, marked with irregular purplish veins, especially on the larger end. It is much admired for its song, and, like the nightingale, sings in the night. These birds are not, however, very common in cages, but when we are walking in summer by the sides of a river, they present us with an agreeable harmony.

THE GREAT TIT-MOUSE.

THIS bird is also called the ox-eye: it is six inches in length, nine inches in breadth, and weighs about an ounce. The bill is straight, black, and half an inch in length: the tongue is broad, ending in four filaments; the head and

throat are black; the cheeks white; the back and coverts of the wings green. The belly is of a yellowish green, divided in the center, by a line of black, extending to the vent: the rump is of a bluish grey; and the quill-feathers are dusky, tipped with blue and white. The lesser coverts are blue, and the greater are tipped with white. The tail is about two inches and an half long, and of a black colour, except on the outward edges, which are blue.

Though our gardens are sometimes visited by this bird, it chiefly inhabits woods; where it makes its nest in hollow-trees, and lays nine or ten eggs. This, and the whole tribe of tit-mice, feed on insects which they find in the bark of trees; but, in the spring, they do considerable mischief in fruit-gardens, by destroying the tender buds. Like wood-peckers, they are perpetually running up and down the trunks of trees in pursuit of food.

THE BLUE TIT-MOUSE.

THIS is a very beautiful bird, but, like the preceding, does great injury to fruit-

fruit-trees : it breeds in holes of walls ; and lays about twelve or fourteen eggs. It has a short dusky bill, and the crown of the head is of a fine blue-colour : the forehead and cheeks are white ; and a black line extends from the bill to the eyes. The back is of a yellowish green, and the lower-side of the body yellow : the wings are blue, marked transversely with a white bar ; the tail is blue, and the legs are of a lead colour.

THE COLE-MOUSE, OR BLACK TIT-MOUSE.

THE length of this bird is five inches, and the breadth seven. It is distinguished from all other tit-mice by its smallness. It has a black head with a white spot on the hind-part ; the back is of a greenish ash-colour, and the rump is of a deeper green. The outer-edges of the prime wing-feathers are also green.

THE LONG-TAILED TIT-MOUSE.

THIS bird is five inches and a quarter in length, and seven inches in breadth. The bill is black, short, thick, and very convex, differing from all the rest of the tit-mouse kind; the base is beset with small bristles, and the irides are of a hazel colour. The top of the head is white, surrounded with a broad stroke of black, which rises on each side of the upper-chap, passes over each eye, and unites at the hind-part of the head; continuing along the middle of the back to the rump. On each side of this black stroke, the feathers are of a purplish red, as well as those immediately incumbent on the tail. The covert feathers of the wings are black; the secondary and quill-feathers are dusky. The tail is three inches long, and formed like that of a magpie, consisting of twelve feathers of unequal lengths: the cheeks and throat are white; the breast and belly are white, tinged with red: the legs and feet are black.

The nest is elegantly built of an oval shape, and about six inches deep,

it is composed of moss, wool, feathers, and down. This bird lays from twelve to sixteen eggs, and the young follow the parents the whole winter.

There is another bird called the Marsh-Titmoufe, from its frequenting wet places, which is about four inches and an half in length, and three inches in breadth. The head is black, the cheeks white, the back greenish, and the feet of a lead colour.

The Bahama Tit-Moufe of Catesby, has a longish black bill, somewhat crooked: the head, back, and wings are brown, a white streak extending from the corner of the bill to the back-part of the head. The breast, and the upper-part of the wings are yellow. It has a long tail, brown above, and cream-coloured below.

The Crested Tit-Moufe is about five inches in length, and eight inches in breadth: the feathers on the top of the head are black, with white edges. It is distinguished from other birds of this kind by the crest, which is about an inch in height.

OF THE HUMMING-BIRD, AND
ITS VARIETIES.

THOUGH this species is the least, it is certainly the most beautiful of all others. In quadrupeds the smallest animals are noxious, disagreeable, and loathsome; but the smallest of birds are the most beautiful, innocent, and sportive. Of all those that flutter in the garden, or paint the landscape, the humming-bird is not only the most inoffensive, but the most delightful to behold.

Of this charming creature there are six or seven varieties, from the magnitude of a wren down to that of an humble-bee. It appears astonishing to an European that there should be a bird existing so extremely small, and yet completely furnished out with bill, feathers, wings, and intestines, being an exact resemblance in miniature of those of the largest kind: but these are daily seen in infinite numbers, like butterflies in a warm summer's day, sporting in the fields of America, from flower to flower, and extracting their sweets.

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The smallest of this class is about the size of an hazel-nut : the feathers on the wings and tail are black : those on the body, and under the wings, are a mixture of green and brown, glossed with a beautiful red cast : the head is adorned with a crest, which is green at the bottom, and of a bright yellow, or gold-colour at the top. The bill is black, straight and slender.

The larger humming-bird is without a crest on it head, and is about half the size of a common wren : from the throat, half way down the belly, it is covered with changeable crimson-coloured feathers, which, in different lights, appear in a variety of different colours. The heads of both these birds are small, studded with very little sparkling black eyes.

As soon as the sun is risen, variety of humming-birds are seen fluttering about the flowers, without ever lighting upon them. The rapidity of the motion of their wings is so great, that it is impossible to discern their colours, except by their glittering : they are perpetually on the wing, visiting flower after flower, and extracting its honey. For this purpose, nature has furnished

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them with a forked-tongue that enters the cup of the flower, and procures the nectar upon which alone they subsist. They have the name of humming-birds from the sound occasioned by the rapid motion of their wings.

The nest of the humming-bird is also worthy of admiration: it is suspended in the air, at the point of the twigs of an orange, a citron, or a pomegranate-tree. The male furnishes materials, and the female is the architect: the nest consists of moss, the fibres of vegetables, and cotton; it is admirably contrived, and about the size of half an hen's egg. In this the female lays two eggs, about the size of small peas, which are of a pure white, with a few yellowish spots. During the time of incubation, she seldom quits the nest, except a few minutes in the morning and evening, when the dew is upon the flowers and their honey is in perfection. In her absence the male supplies her place; the eggs being so very small that there would be danger in exposing it to the weather for ever so short a time. The time of incubation continues twelve days, at which time the young ones are excluded, and are

are about the size of a blue-bottle-fly. At first they are bare, afterwards they become cloathed with down, which is at length succeeded by feathers.

On the continent of America, these birds continue to flutter the year round; for in those warm latitudes, where they have always plenty of flowers, there can be no deficiency of food. But it is otherwise in the islands of the Antilles, where, when the winter-season approaches, they retire, and, as some imagine, continue in a torpid state during the severity of that season. At Jamaica, and Surinam, where they have plenty of flowers the whole year, the humming-bird never disappears.

Besides the humming noise produced by their wings, travellers assure us that these birds have a little interrupted chirrup; and Labat asserts that they have a most pleasing melancholy melody in their voices, though small and proportioned to the organs that produce it.

This pretty little animal's plumage was formerly used by the Indians in adorning the head-dress and belts; at present, however, they take the bird rather for the purpose of selling it as a curiosity

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curiosity to the Europeans, than that of ornament for themselves : the taste of savage finery is now wearing out even among the Americans.

The different sizes and varieties of this class of birds are usually distinguished by the following appellations : the larger Humming-Bird, the Long-Tailed Black-Capped Humming-Bird, the Lesser Humming-Bird, the Little Humming-Bird with a crooked Bill, the Humming-bird with a black Bill, the green Humming-Bird, and the Ash-Coloured Humming-Bird.

OF BIRDS OF THE CRANE KIND.

NATURE has peopled the woods and the fields with a variety of the most beautiful birds ; and, that no part of her extensive territories might remain untenanted, she has also stocked the water with feathered inhabitants. She is as carefully provided for the wants of her animals in this element, as she is for those that inhabit the air : she has defended their feathers with a natural oil to give them security, and united their toes by a webbed membrane to facilitate their motion. But she has formed

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formed a numerous tribe of birds that seem to partake of a middle nature, between the classes of land-birds that avoid the water, and of water-fowls that are peculiarly adapted for swimming and living in it : these have divided toes, and, on that account, seem fitted to live upon land ; but they are furnished with appetites that attach them chiefly to the waters : they provide all their sustenance from watery places, but they are unqualified to seek it in those depths where it is usually found in the greatest plenty. They live indeed among the waters, but they are incapable of swimming in them ; they have in general long legs, fitted for wading in shallow waters, or long bills proper for groping in them in pursuit of their prey.

Birds of this kind, habituated to marshy places, may be known either by the length of their legs, or the scaly surface of them. Birds of this kind too are generally bare of feathers half way up the thigh, and all of them above the knee at least ; so that there is a surprizing difference between the leg of a crane, which is naked almost up

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to the body, and the falcon, which is clothed almost to the toes.

In most birds of this class the bill is also very distinguishable. It is, in general, longer than that of other birds, and at the point is possessed of extreme sensibility, and furnished with nerves for the better feeling their food at the bottom of marshes, where it cannot be seen. Some of these birds are furnished with every convenience, having long legs for wading, long necks for stooping, and long bills for searching. It is generally observed if the legs of a bird are long, the neck is also long in proportion; there would otherwise be a defect in its conformation; as it would be lifted upon stilts above its food, without being furnished with an instrument to reach it.

If we take a comparative view of this class of birds, they seem inferior to those of every other tribe. Their instincts are more simple than those of the parrow, and their methods of obtaining food less ingenious than those of the falcon: in cunning they are exceeded by the pie, and they want the fecundity of the poultry tribe. None of

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this kind therefore are taken under the protection of man; they are neither caged like the nightingale, nor kept tame like the turkey; but lead a life of precarious liberty in fens and marshes, or on the borders of the seas or lakes. They all live upon fish or insects, one or two only excepted: and even those which are called mud-suckers, such as the snipe and wood-cock, perhaps grope the bottom of marshy places only for such insects as are deposited there by their kind.

Such of this class of birds as feed upon insects are fit to be eaten; but those which live entirely upon fish, acquire in their flesh the rancidity of their diet, and are, in general, improper for our tables. To sailors on long voyage, indeed, every thing that has life seems good to be eaten: the accounts, therefore, of the flesh of these birds are not to be depended upon; and when they mention the heron or the stork of other countries as luxurious food, we should always attend to the state of their appetites.

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THE CRANE.

VARIOUS are the accounts given of this bird's size and dimensions. According to Willoughby and Pennant, the crane is from five to six feet long, from the tip to the tail. Other accounts say, it is above five feet high; and others that it is about the height of a man. Brisson, however, seems to give this bird its real dimensions, when he describes it as something less than the brown stork, about three feet high, and about four from the tip to the tail. Still, however, the numerous testimonies of its superior size are not entirely to be rejected; and, perhaps, that from which Brisson took his dimensions, was one of the smallest of the kind.

According to Brisson, the crane is exactly three feet four inches from the tip to the tail, and four feet from the head to the toe. It is a tall, slender bird, with a long neck and long legs. The top of the head is covered with black bristles, and the back of it is bald and red, which is sufficient to distinguish this bird from the stork, to which it is nearly allied in size and

figure. The plumage is ash-coloured; and two large tufts of feathers spring from the pinion of each wing. These resemble hair, and are finely curled at the ends, which the bird has a power of erecting and depressing at pleasure. Gesner informs us, that in his time, these feathers were often set in gold, and worn as ornaments in caps.

The crane is a bird with which all the ancient writers are familiar; and, in describing it, they have not failed to mix imagination with history. From the policy of the cranes, they say, we are to look for an idea of the most perfect republic amongst ourselves; from their tenderness to their decrepid parents, we are to learn lessons of filial piety; but particularly from their conduct in fighting with the pigmies of Ethiopia, we are to receive our maxims in the art of war. In early times, the history of nature fell to the lot of poets only, and certainly none could so well describe it; but it is a part of their province to embellish also; and when this agreeable science was claimed by a more sober class of people, they were obliged to take the accounts of things

as they found them ; thus fable ran down, blended with truth, to posterity.

There is doubtless some foundation of truth in these relations ; but much more has been added by fancy. Cranes are certainly very social birds, and they are seldom seen alone. Their usual method of flying or sitting, is in flocks of fifty or sixty together ; and while some of them feed, others stand like centinels upon duty. The fable of their supporting their aged parents, may have arisen from their strict connubial affection ; and as for their fighting with the pigmies, it may not be improbable but that they have boldly withstood the invasions of monkeys coming to rob their nests.

The crane is a wandering, sociable bird, that subsists chiefly upon vegetables ; and is known in every country of Europe, except our own. There is no part of the world, says Belonius, where the fields are cultivated, that the crane does not come in with the husbandman for a share in the harvest. As birds of passage, they are seen to depart and return regularly at those seasons when their provision invites or repels them. They usually quit Europe about the

latter end of autumn, and return in the spring. In the inland parts of the continent, they are seen crossing the country, in large flocks, making from the northern regions towards the south. In these migrations, however, they are not so resolutely bent upon expedition, but that if a field of corn presents itself in their way, they will stop for a time to regale upon it : on such occasions they do incredible damage, chiefly in the night ; and when the husbandman rises in the morning he beholds his fields laid entirely waste by an enemy, whose swiftness his vengeance cannot overtake.

They were formerly known in this island, and held in great estimation, for the delicacy of their flesh : there was even a penalty upon such as destroyed their eggs ; but, at present, this country is too populous and too well cultivated : though our fields may offer them a greater plenty, yet it is so guarded, that these birds find the venture greater than the enjoyment. We are indeed much better off by their absence than their company ; for whatever their flesh might once have been, when, as Plutarch tells us, cranes were
blinded

blinded and kept in coops, to be fattened for the tables of the great in Rome ; or, as they were brought up, stuffed with mint and rue, to the tables of our nobles at home ; they are now considered all over Europe as wretched eating.

The crane's favourite abode is the cold Arctic region. They come down into the more southern parts of Europe, rather as visitants than inhabitants : yet it is not well known how they portion out their time to the different parts of the world. The migrations of the field-fare, or thrush, are obvious, and well known ; they go northward or southward, in one simple track ; when their food fails them here, they have but one region to go to. But the crane changes place like a wanderer. Gesner assures us, that the cranes usually began to quit Germany from about the 11th of September to the 17th of October ; from thence they were seen flying southward by thousands ; and Bede tells us, they arrive in Tuscany a short time after. There they tear up the fields, newly sown, for the grain just committed to the ground, and do incredible mischief. In the severity of winter,

winter, it is probable they go southward, still nearer the line. They again appear in the fields of Pisa, regularly about the twentieth of February, to anticipate the spring.

It is amazing to conceive the heights to which they ascend, when they take these journeys. Their note is remarkably loud, and is often heard in the clouds, when the bird itself is invisible. As it is light in proportion to its size, and spreads a large expanse of wing, it is capable of floating at the greatest height, where the air is lightest; and thus secures its safety, by being entirely out of the reach of man.

Though unseen themselves in their aerial journies, they have a distinct vision of every object below them. They govern and direct their flight by their cries; and exhort each other to proceed, or to descend, when opportunities for depredation present themselves. Their voice is the loudest of all the feathered tribe; and its peculiar clangor arises from the very extraordinary length and contortion of the wind-pipe. In quadrupeds, the wind-pipe is short, and the glottis, or cartilage

lages that form the voice, are at that end next the mouth : in water-fowl the wind-pipe is longer, but the cartilages that form the voice are at the other end, which lies down in their belly. They have therefore much louder voices, in proportion to their size, than any other animals ; for the note, when formed below, is reverberated through all the rings of the wind-pipe, till it reaches the air.

As these birds rise but heavily, they are extremely shy, and seldom suffer mankind to approach them. Their depredations are usually made in the darkest nights, when they sometimes visit a field of corn, and trample it down as if a thousand oxen had crossed over it. If, upon these occasions, they are invaded on any side, the bird that first perceives the danger is sure to sound the alarm, and all are speedily upon the wing. Sometimes they choose an extensive solitary marsh, where they range themselves all day ; and not having that grain which is most agreeable to them, they wade for insects and other food, which they can procure without danger.

But

But though corn is the favourite food of this bird, there is hardly any thing that comes amiss to it. It is peaceful, both in its own society, and with respect to those of the forest. Though so large in appearance, it is sometimes pursued and disabled by a little falcon. It is an animal easily tamed, and, according to Albertus Magnus, has a particular affection for man. The female, which is easily distinguished from the male, by not being bald behind, lays no more than two eggs at a time, which are like those of a goose in size, but of a bluish colour. As soon as the young ones are capable of flying, the parents forsake them to shift for themselves; after first leading them to the places where their food is most easily found. As they grow older their plumage becomes darker. It is not certainly known how long a crane will live, but as a proof of its longevity, Aldrovandus assures us, that his friend of his kept one tame for above forty years. The common people of every country bear the crane a compassionate regard to this day; the ancient prejudices in its favour perhaps still continue to operate. In some countries

countries it is considered as an heinous offence to kill a crane, and though the laws may not punish the offender, the people do not fail to resent the injury.

THE BALEARIC CRANE.

THIS is nearly of the same shape and size as the ordinary crane, with a long neck and long legs like others of the kind; but the bill is shorter, and the feathers are of a dark greenish grey: the most striking parts of this bird's figure are the head and throat. On the head appears a thick round crest, made of bristles, spreading on every side, and resembling rays standing out in different directions. The longest of these rays are about three inches and an half; and they are all topped with a kind of black tassels, which render them extremely beautiful. The sides of the head are bare; whitish, and edged with red; and a kind of bag or wattle hangs beneath the throat, resembling that of a cock, but is not divided into two. The eyes of this bird are large and staring; the pupils are black, with a gold-coloured

loured iris; and, upon the whole, it has a very singular appearance.

This bird is a native of the coast of Africa, and the Cape de Verd islands, and feeds upon grass and seeds. As it runs it extends its wings, and moves very swiftly; otherwise its usual motion is very slow. In their domestic state they mingle with other poultry, and suffer themselves to be approached by every spectator. When they are disposed to go to rest, they generally make choice of some high wall, on which they perch in the manner of a peacock.

THE NUMIDIAN CRANE.

THIS is vulgarly called by our sailors the buffoon-bird, and by the French demoiselle, or lady; because it is supposed to imitate the gestures and dances of the Bohemian ladies. It does not follow people for what it can get, as animals in general do, but in order to be taken notice of; and when they perceive that they are observed, they immediately begin dancing. The French, who are skilled in the arts of elegant gesticulation, consider all its motions

motions as lady-like, and graceful. Our English sailors, however, who are less competent judges of the dancing art, think this bird cuts but a very ridiculous figure while it is thus in motion. It stoops, then rises, raises one wing, and then another. After that it turns round, sails forward, and then back again. Some are of opinion that these contortions are but the awkward expression of the poor animal's fears, and not of its pleasures.

It has appendages at the head which are three inches and an half in length, composed of white feathers, consisting of fine long fibres. The rest of the plumage is of a leaden grey colour, except some large feathers on the wings, which are darker, and a few feathers about the head and neck. Some have plumes of feathers erected like a crest on the top of the head. From the corner of each eye a streak of white feathers passes under the appendages, which form the great feathered ears. The fore-part of the neck is adorned with black feathers, composed of very fine soft and long fibres, hanging down upon the stomach, and give the bird a very graceful appearance.

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The length of this bird, from the tip of the bill to the end of the claws, is three feet and an half. The neck is fourteen inches; and it is ten inches from the thigh-bone to the extremity of the great-toe. The fore-side of the legs are covered with large scales: the sole of the foot has the appearance of shagreen-leather, and the claws are black. It is an inhabitant of Numidia.

THE HOOPING CRANE.

THE length of this bird, from the tip of the bill to the end of the claws is five feet seven inches; the bone that extends from the knee to the foot is eleven inches; and the thigh is bare five inches above the knee: the middle-toe is five inches long without the claw, and the bill, which is toothed at the point, is six inches long. The nostrils are placed in the channels in each side at about a third part of the length from the head. The chaps are of a yellowish brown at the ends, and a little dusky in the middle. The top of the head is covered with a reddish skin; behind which there is a triangular spot, with

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one of the points backwards : the sides of the head, throat, neck, body, and tail, are white ; but the nine outermost quills of the wings are black ; and the tenth black and white ; the rest being entirely white. The outer and middle toes are united by a web as far as the first joint, and the legs and feet are covered with black scales. This is thought to be a bird of passage : it is however seen in the spring about the mouths of rivers in Florida.

THE JABIRU.

THIS is one of the crane kind, and native of Brasil : the bill is black, and eleven inches long ; and the body exceeds the size of the swan. It is covered with white feathers, the head and neck excepted, which are quite naked.

THE JABIRU GUACU.

THIS is also a native of Brasil. It has a red bill, which is thirteen inches long ; though its body is not above the size of a common stork. This also is covered with white feathers, except

on the head and neck, which are entirely bare. The lower-chap of this bird is broad and bends upwards.

There is another Brazilian bird of this kind, called the Anhima. It is a water-fowl of the rapacious kind, and larger than a swan. The bill is black, and does not exceed two inches in length; but the most distinguishing mark is a horn growing from the forehead as long as the bill, and bending forward like that of the fabulous unicorn of the ancients. This horn is about the thickness of a crow-quill, perfectly round and regular, and of an ivory colour. This formidable bird seems to be armed at all points; for two straight triangular spurs, about as thick as a man's little finger, spring from the fore-part of each wing: the claws are also long and sharp. These birds are never found alone, but always in pairs. The cock and hen wander together, and so great is their fidelity that, when one dies, it is said the other never departs from the body, but refuses sustenance, and dies at the side of its companion.



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THE STORK.

AT a transient view the stork might be confounded with the crane. It is of the same size, and has the same formation as to the bill, neck, legs, and body, but it is rather more corpulent. The colour of the crane is ash and black; that of the stork is white and brown: the nails of the toes of the stork are also very peculiar; not being clawed like those of other birds, but flat like the nails of a man. The crane has a loud piercing voice; the stork is silent, and produces no other noise than the clacking of its under chap against the upper.

It has often been remarked, that the social affections are found to be stronger in their descent than their ascent; that the love of parents to their children, for instance, is commonly more ardent than that of children for their parents; though, from the state of things, and from the obligations which children owe their parents, one might reasonably expect it to be otherwise. However, there is a visible good design in this wise destination; we see in it, as in every

object we seriously contemplate, the determination of high wisdom. The offspring both of the human and the animal race, come into the world feeble and helpless; and if the parental affection were not exceedingly forcible, they must perish in their weak and forlorn condition; and the creation would thus speedily be brought to an end. There is not the same reason for the return of affection in the offspring, and therefore we rarely find it in the animal world: soon as the young is able to provide for itself, a mutual forgetfulness generally ensues, and the parent grows as regardless of its offspring as the offspring of its parent.

There is however one creature, which contradicts this almost general rule in the animal world; and which is as remarkable for its love to its parents, as other creatures are for their love to their young: this is the stork, whose very name in the Hebrew language [*chesidah*] signifies mercy or piety, and whose name in the English seems to be taken, if not directly, yet secondarily through the Saxon, from the Greek word *storge*, which is often used in our language for natural affection.

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The stork is a bird of passage, and is spoken of as such in scripture : See Jerem. viii. 7. "The stork knoweth her appointed time, &c." Some say, that when they go away, the stork which comes last to the place of rendezvous, is killed on the spot. They go away in the night to the southern countries. Thompson, in his Seasons, gives the following fine description of the passage of the storks :

Where the Rhine loses his majestic force
In Belgian plains, won from the raging deep,
By diligence amazing, and the strong
Unconquerable hand of liberty,
The stork-assembly meets : for many a day
Consulting deep and various, ere they take
Their arduous voyage thro' the liquid sky.
And now their rout design'd, their leaders chose,
Their tribes adjusted, clean'd their vigorous wings,
And many a circle, many a short essay
Wheel'd round and round, in congregation full
The figur'd flight ascends ; and riding high
Th' aerial billows, mixes with the clouds.

AUTUMN, l. 859.

The stork has a very long beak, and long red legs. It feeds upon serpents, frogs, and insects : as it seeks for these in watery places, nature has provided it with long legs ; and as it flies away, as well as the crane and heron, to its
nest

nest with its prey ; therefore the bill is strong and jagged, the sharp hooks of which enable it to detain its prey, which it might otherwise be difficult to hold. The abbe La Pluche says, “ a friend of mine, who has an estate at Abeville, bounded by a river plentifully stored with eels, saw a heron one day carry off one of the largest of those creatures into his heynery, in spite of the efforts and undulations of the eel to oppose his flight.” Thus we see the wise provider has not given those creatures such bills for naught : the storks dig with theirs into the earth for serpents and adders, which, however large, they convey to their young, to whom the poison of those animals is perfectly inoffensive. The plumage of the stork would be quite white, if it was not that the extremity of its wings are black, and also some small part of its head and thighs. It lays but four eggs, and sits for the space of thirty days.

But that which renders it the most remarkable is, its love to its parents, whom it never forsakes, but tenderly feeds and defends, even to death. The very learned and judicious Bochart *,

* See his Hierox, b. ii. c. xxix. p. 327.

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has collected a variety of passages from the ancients, wherein they testify this curious particular; that the stork is eminent for its performance of what St. Paul enjoins, "Children's requiting their parents," 1 Tim. v. 4. This caused one of the seven wise men to reply to Cræsus, when he asked, "which of the animals was the most happy? The stork; because it performs what is just and right by nature, without any compelling law." And hence one of our poets speaks thus finely of the stork:

The stork's the emblem of true piety:
Because when age has seiz'd, and made his dam
Unfit for flight, the grateful young one takes
His mother on his back, provides her food;
Repaying thus her tender care of him
Ere he was fit to fly, by bearing her."

BEAUMONT.

The Dutch are very solicitous for the preservation of the stork in every part of their republic. This bird seems to have taken refuge among their towns; and builds on the tops of their houses without any molestation. There it is seen resting familiarly in their streets, and protected as well by the laws as by
the

the affections of the people. They are even of opinion that it will not live but in a republic.

How amiable is filial piety ! Observe, oh ye children, and imitate ; and let not the example of a bird upbraid and condemn you ; but on the contrary, stimulate your souls to the discharge of this most pleasing duty ! “ Could you be sensible of the anxious thoughts, the sleepless nights, the watchful days your parents have passed for you : of the bleeding fears, the affectionate hopes, and all the unutterable concern, which throbs in their bosoms for you : a sympathetic gratitude would fill your souls, and you would think it your highest happiness, as it really is your indispensable duty, by every possible means to make them some amends ; and to sooth the decline of their days with all the lenient assuages of filial piety and love. And oh ! how exquisitely comfortable, how divinely pleasing to rock the cradle of declining age, and to return the unspeakable obligations of parental care !

Parents who take that care, who are diligent to improve the minds of their children in true religion and virtue,
will

will but rarely be disappointed of that return. Indeed, love alone, mere natural affection, may not be depended on, being regarded as a thing of course which a child is not much concerned to return; and which loses much of its force, when the child meets with other objects to divert its affections. But a mind trained up in wisdom and virtue can never be ungrateful to its best benefactors: the early impressions of a well-managed authority are never wholly effaced. And considering the advantages which nature gives parents, it is easy to establish a lasting dominion over the supple spirits, if they are not intoxicated into a shameful neglect of their children and themselves. For children are easily taught to stand in awe of their parents, to regard their persons as sacred, and their commands as indisputable."

Happy parents, who thus secure the best love of their children! Happy children, who love and obey their parents; they shall be blest of their God: they shall not fail of their reward!

THE

THE HERON.

THOUGH the crane, the stork, and the heron bear a strong affinity to each other, the heron may be distinguished from them, not only by its size, which is much less, but its bill, which in proportion is much longer; but particularly by the middle claw on each foot, which is toothed like a saw for the better seizing and securing its slippery prey. There is also an anatomical distinction, in which herons differ from all other birds; they having but one cœcum, though all other birds have two.

Brisson has enumerated no less than forty-seven sorts of this tribe, all differing in figure, size, and plumage; but they all seem possessed of the same manners, and have one general character of cowardice, rapacity and indolence, yet insatiable hunger. Other birds grow fat by an abundant supply of food; but these, though excessively voracious and destructive, are even found to be lean and hungry.

In proportion to its bulk, the common heron is remarkably light, and seldom exceeds three pounds and a half.



Common Heron





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half in weight; though its length is three feet, and its breadth upwards of five feet. Its body is very small, and its skin remarkably thin: the bill is five inches long, from the point to the base: the claws are sharp and long; and the middlemost is toothed like a saw. But, notwithstanding it is thus formidably armed, it is so cowardly as to fly at the approach of a sparrow-hawk. It must be capable of enduring a long abstinence, as its food, which is fish and frogs, cannot be readily procured at all times. It however commits great devastation in our ponds; for, though nature has not furnished it with webs to swim, she has given it very long legs to wade after its prey: the smaller fry are his chief subsistence, and as these are pursued by their larger fellows of the deep, they are obliged to take refuge in shallow waters, where they find the heron a still more formidable enemy.

The heron wades as far as he can go into the water, where he impatiently waits the approach of his prey; which he darts upon with unerring aim, as soon as it appears in sight. In this manner he is said to destroy more in

one week, than an otter in three months. And Mr. Willoughby assures us it sometimes seizes fish of a tolerable size : “ I have seen an heron, says he, that had been shot, that had seventeen carps in his belly at once, which he will digest in six or seven hours, and then to fishing again. I have seen a carp taken out of a heron’s belly, nine inches and an half long. Several gentlemen who kept tame herons, to try what quantity one of them would eat in a day, have put several smaller roach and dace in a tub, and they have found him eat fifty in a day, one day with another. In this manner a single heron will destroy fifteen thousand carp in a single half year.”

Though the heron lives chiefly among pools and marshes, it builds on the tops of the highest trees, and sometimes on cliffs hanging over the sea. The nest is composed of sticks, lined with wool ; and the female lays four large eggs of a pale green colour. Such, however, is the indolence of the nature of this bird, that it never takes the trouble of building a nest for itself, if it can procure one deserted by the owl or crow. Indeed it usually enlarges it, and lines





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it within side; and, if the original possessor happens to renew his claim, the usurper treats him very roughly, and drives him away for his impertinence.

The heron was formerly much esteemed as food, and made a favourite dish at the table of the great, but now it is thought detestable eating. It is said to be very long lived; and Mr. Keysser's account says sixty years is no very uncommon age *.

THE CRESTED HERON.

THE bill of this elegant species is about six inches long, very strong and sharp-pointed; the colour dusky above, and yellow beneath: the space round the eyes, between them and the bill, are covered with a bare greenish skin: the forehead and crown of the head are white; the hind-part being adorned with a beautiful pendant crest of black feathers. The hind-part of the neck, and the coverts of the wings are grey: the back is clad with down, and covered with the scapular feathers: the fore-part of the neck is white, elegantly spotted with a double row of black.

* Keysser's Travels, l. 70.

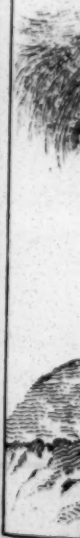
The feathers, which are long and narrow, fall loose over the breast; the scapulars are grey, streaked with white. The ridge of the wing, and the breast, belly, and thighs are white; the latter dashed with yellow. The tail, which consists of twelve feathers, is ash-coloured; and the legs are of a dirty green.

THE GREAT WHITE HERON,
OR EGRET.

THE length of this bird, from the tip of the bill to the end of the claws, is four feet and an half; and to the end of the tail three feet and a quarter; the breadth, with extended wings, is five feet and an half; and the weight about two pounds and an half. This bird is entirely white, by which it may be distinguished from the common heron; it may also be distinguished by its size, which is smaller; by the length of its tail; and by its having no crest. This heron is not often seen in England.

There is a bird of this kind, called the Lesser White Heron, which only differs from the preceding in size, and in having a crest.

The little white heron of Catesby, has a crooked red bill, with a yellow



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Iris of the eyes : the body is white, and the feet are green.

THE YELLOW AND GREEN HERON OF MARSEILLES.

THE bill of this bird is black above, yellow below, and about three inches in length. The irides are white, as well as that part of the neck next the chin ; but the rest of the neck, the top of the head, the breast and belly, are variegated with brown lines. The back is black ; the wings are yellowish, spotted with black ; and the tail is short ; the feathers of which are short, and greatly resemble hair. The thighs are ash-colour, the feet black, and the claws yellow.

THE BITTERN.

THE bittern is less than the heron, and has a weaker bill, which is not above four inches in length : but it principally differs from the heron in its colour, which is usually of a palish yellow, spotted and barred with black. It has two kinds of notes ; the one croaking, when it is disturbed ; the other bellowing, which it commences
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in the spring, and ends in autumn. The latter is indeed like the roaring of a bull, but hollower and louder, and is heard at the distance of a mile. From the loudness and solemnity of this note, many have imagined that the bird made use of external instruments to produce it, and that so small a body could never eject such a quantity of note. The common people are of opinion that it thrusts its bill into a reed; which, like a pipe, assists in swelling the note above its natural pitch. Thompson the poet, and many others, suppose the bittern puts its head under water, and then violently blowing, produces that noise. The fact is, its wind-pipe is fitted to produce the sound for which it is remarkable; the lower-part of it dividing into the lungs, is supplied with a thin loose membrane, which can be filled with a large body of air, and exploded at pleasure. It is certain that the bittern is frequently heard where there are neither reeds nor waters to assist its sonorous invitations.

This is a very retired bird, concealing itself in the midst of reeds and rushes in marshy places. Though it is of the heron kind, it is neither so de-

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fructive nor so voracious; and though it so nearly resembles the heron in figure, it differs from it greatly in its manners and its appetites. The food of the bittern is chiefly frogs: it builds its nest with the leaves of water-plants; and lays six or seven eggs of an ash-green colour. The heron feeds its young for several days; the bittern conducts its little ones to their food in about three days. The flesh of the bittern has much the same flavour as that of the hare, and is free from the fishyness of that of the heron: it is therefore eagerly sought after by the fowler, and as it is with difficulty provoked to flight, and has a dull and flagging pace when on the wing, it does not often escape him. Towards the end of autumn, however, it seems to have shook off its wonted indolence, and is seen rising in a spiral ascent till it is quite lost from the view, making at the same time a very singular noise. Thus it often happens that the same animal assumes different desires at different times; and tho' the bittern has acquired the name of the star-reaching-bird among the Latins, the Greeks have thought it merited the epithet of lazy.

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This bird is called the mire-drum in the north of England.

THE NORTH-AMERICAN BITTERN.

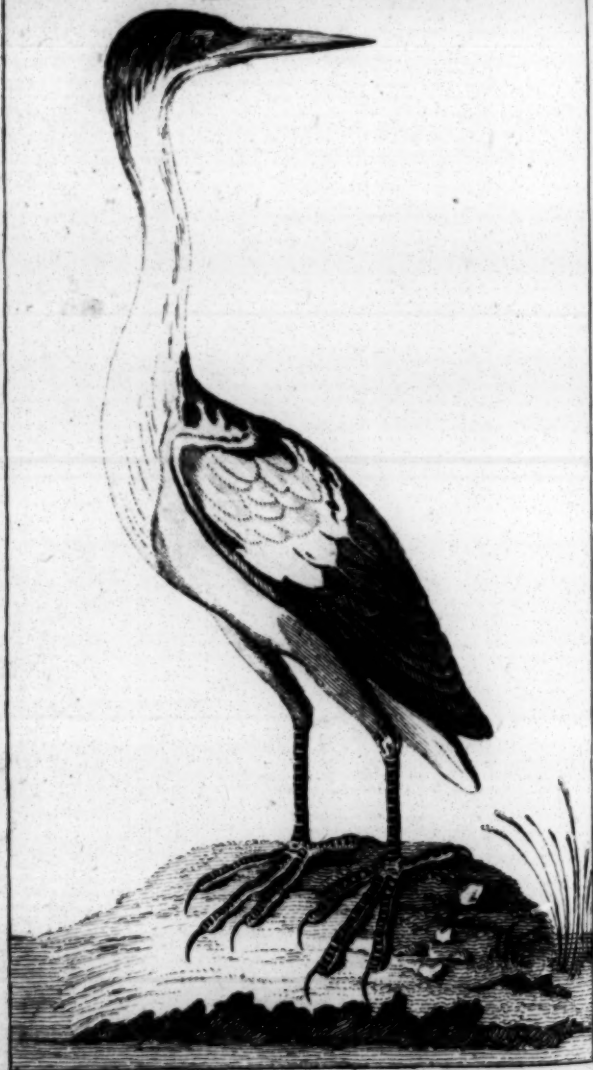
THIS is smaller than the English bittern; the wing, when closed, not exceeding twelve inches in length. It resembles ours with regard to the colour and figure, but may be distinguished from it by carefully comparing them together.

THE SMALL BITTERN.

THIS bird is fourteen inches in length, and twenty in breadth. The bill is two inches long, and sharp at the point; the upper-chap being black, and the lower yellow. The base of the bill is surrounded with a yellow naked membrane, extending as far as the nostrils. The tail is not above an inch long; and the feathers on the top of the head are brown, rising a little in the manner of a tuft. The upper-part of the neck, the back, wings, and tail are also brown, a few whitish and tawny spots excepted. The lower-part of the neck, the breast, and belly are of a light brown,



Little Bittern





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brown, mixed with white and flesh-colour.

THE LITTLE BITTERN OF BRASIL.

THIS bird is smaller than the common pigeon, but the length of its neck is about seven inches. The skin at the base of the bill is yellowish. The upper part of the head is of the colour of steel, interspersed with palish brown feathers. The neck, breast, and belly are whitish; but the back is a mixture of black and brown. The long feathers of the wings are greenish, with a white spot at the extremity of each. The other parts are beautifully variegated with black, brown, and ash-colour; and the feet are of a blossom-colour. The bill is long, straight, and sharp, and black at the point; the iris of the eyes is of a gold-colour, and the tail does not extend beyond the wings.

THE SPOON-BILL, OR SHOVEL- LER.

IF there had not been philosophers, who have contended for the fortuitous pro-

production of things, one would have conceived it impossible for any human being to entertain so strange a notion. The most superficial survey of nature so clearly indicates wisdom and design, that it seems to shock every principle of common sense to deny that in the works of the Deity, which we so readily confess in the works of men. But if order and harmony sufficiently prove design, variety and beauty as evidently prove wisdom ; and the latter are as visible in the works of God as the former : we have instances enough before us ; but among the rest let us at present fix our attention on the spoon-bill, as singular and curious a bird as any in nature.

When it stands erect, the spoon-bill is about a yard in height ; the body is small, but it is the length of the legs and neck which give it this stature. The beak is about eight inches in length. It is all the way broad and flat ; but as the beaks of all other birds are largest at the head, and smallest at the point, this, on the contrary, is largest there ; it swells out into a broad and rounded end, like the bowl of a spoon, except that it is not hollow ; and whether shut

or open, makes a very singular appearance.

The bird is all over as white as snow, and though it has no sort of variety about it, yet appears wonderfully pretty by its cleanliness. It is frequent in many parts of Europe, and is always seen about waters. The structure of the bill appears strange at first sight ; but, like all other things, in the contrivance of the God of nature, when we come to enquire into its use, it is easy to know why it had this form. The food of the creature is principally the frog, a nimble and cunning animal, which will evade the stroke of a sharp beak darted down at it, or will slip away sometimes from the heron, even when seized ; the spoon-bill, therefore, opening its beak wide, places it near the ground where these reptiles are frequent, and when any come in its way, closes the beak upon them : the beak is not only broad to hold them in a large grasp at once, but it is notched and toothed all the way round ; so that to escape is impracticable. With this the bird crushes the frog till it is half dead, and then swallows it.

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Thus we see nature does nothing in vain ; and he who can conceive that such a singular instance of design is the effect of blind chance, and not the production of an All-wise Designer, must have either a very bad head, or a worse heart ; and well deserves to sit as a scholar at the feet of that Frenchman *, who, to discredit the scripture-account of the origin of man, has recourse to the vainest and most absurd of all systems ; and would have us believe, that men of different colours and tempers, sprung, like mushrooms, out of different soils, on this globe ! Amazing absurdity ! But to what lengths will not pride and the love of paradox, lead men !—How much happier will it be ; how much wiser and better men shall we prove ourselves, by adoring the Almighty and the All-wise, and looking up to him, through the glass of the creatures, with humility, confidence, joy, and love ?

The spoon-bill of America is of a beautiful rose-colour, or a delightful crimson. Beauty of plumage seems to

* M. Voltaire.



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be the prerogative of all the birds of that continent.

A bird so oddly fashioned as the spoon-bill, might be expected to possess some very peculiar appetites ; but it seems to lead a life entirely resembling all those of the crane kind. In Europe it breeds in high-trees, in company with the heron, and in a nest formed of the same materials : it lays four or five eggs, which are white, powdered with a few pale spots.

THE FLAMINGO.

A curious enquirer into nature could no sooner cast his eyes upon this extraordinary bird, than he would be satisfied, that some peculiar ends were to be answered, by its uncommon length of legs and neck ; the largest, we believe, of any of the bird-kind. And certainly nothing can be a stronger proof of design and wisdom, in the Creator of all things, than the correspondence observable in creatures between their wants, and the provision for those wants. The flamingo is a sufficient example : it is frequent, in the warmer climates, and most commonly

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found about the shallow shores of the sea, and the mouths of rivers. When it is seen in the water, which is generally the case, the body only is on the surface, and it appears swimming, tho' really standing. The head also, is almost constantly under water, in search of food : at these times all that is seen, is the body of a bird, as large as a wild goose, or a little more ; but with what astonishment does the stranger see it come out of the water ! The head is first raised erect, and the surprising length of the neck, is like that of the ostrich, only more extraordinary : the body, as it comes on shore, is raised as much above the ground, as the head above the body, and there stalks forth a bird of a wonderful height ; and in beauty surpassing almost every other. The wings nearly cover the body, and the tail is nothing : what part of the body remains uncovered is snow white ; the colour of the wings is of a scarlet, so bright, that the eye is dazzled to look long upon it ; and the long feathers are of the deepest black : the neck is of the same snow-white with the body, and the legs are of the same scarlet with the wings : the beak is blue, ex-
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cept at the tip, where it is black. It is not long, straight, and sharp, as in the heron kind, but vastly strong, and of a shape so singular, that it appears broken. The legs and thighs, which are not much thicker than a man's finger, are about two feet eight inches high; and its neck near three feet long. The toes of the bird are connected together, by a membrane like those of the duck-kind; so that it *can* swim; but the legs are long, and it never makes this use of them, in the common course of its feeding: the only purpose to which these webs serve, is the preservation of its life on singular occasions. The tides are sudden in some parts of America, where the bird is common; and while it is rooting under some rough stone for a shell-fish, it becomes out of its depth. In this case the least gust of air might blow it to sea, and it must perish, for it does not very easily rise from the water, when out of its depth. The webbed feet now are useful; it swims till it can reach the bottom, and as soon as a small part of its legs are out of the water, it takes wing.

Thus an indulgent providence hath taken care, as well for its particular

safety, as its general support; and he must be blind, who does not see the provision, which the Creator hath made for this bird's supply of its wants, as well as those of others of the same kind. As they are to receive their nourishment from animals or plants, which are found in the water, and yet have no power to swim; the length of their legs and neck, sufficiently answers all their demands. "Those who admire," says a learned writer, "the wonderful means, by which the God of nature has contrived, that those animals, which he has endued with a lesser principle than reason, should provide themselves with food, and secure their existence, during a life, in which they are liable to innumerable accidents, would add a great deal to the measure of their surprise, did they comprehend the variety of those means!" How manifold are his works!

"The flesh of an old flamingo," says Dampier, "is black and hard, though well tasted; but that of a young one is much better. But, of all other delicacies, the flamingo's tongue is the most celebrated. A dish of these
tongues,"

tongues," continues he, " is a feast for an emperor."

These birds always go in flocks, and are sometimes seen, at the dawn of day, flying down in great numbers from the mountains; and conducting each other with a trumpet cry, sounding like the word *tococo*, from whence the savages of Canada have given them the name. Their time of breeding is regulated by the climate in which they reside: in North-America they breed in our summer; on the other side of the line they take the most favourable season of the year. They build in extensive unfrequented marshes; and their nests are not less curious than the animals which build them: they are raised about a foot and an half from the surface of the pool, and are formed of mud scraped up together, and hardened by the sun, or the heat of the bird's body: they resemble one of those pots which we see placed on chimnies, and are hollowed out in the shape of the bird, and have no lining but the well cemented mud that forms the sides of the building. The female lays only two eggs; and as her legs are immoderately long, she straddles on the nest, while

her legs hang down, one on each side, into the water,

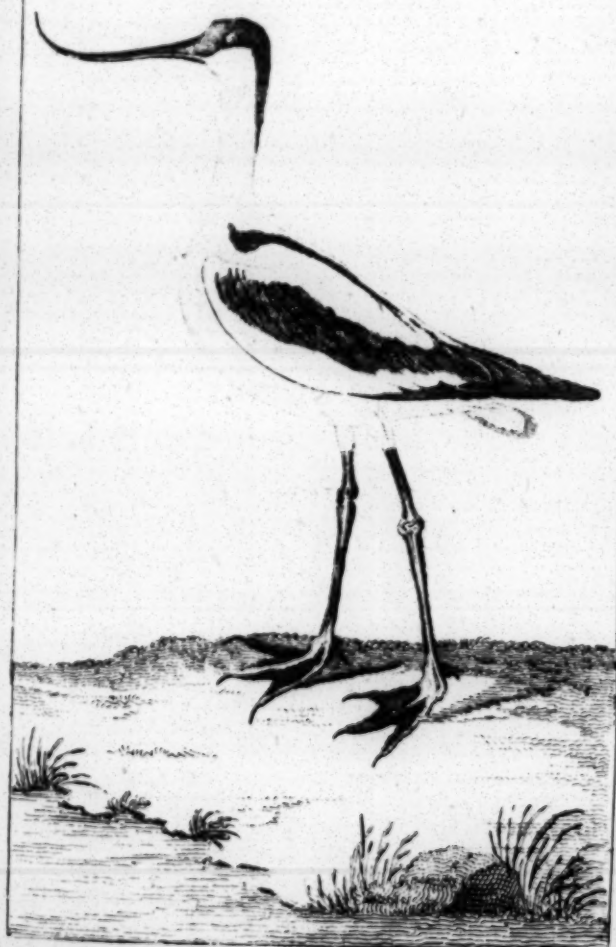
THE AVOSETTA, OR SCOOPER.

THE avosetta may be distinguished from all other birds by the singular form of its bill, which turns up like a hook, in an opposite direction to that of the hawk or parrot : this extraordinary bill is about three inches and an half long, slender, compressed very thin, flexible, and of a substance like whalebone. The tongue is short : the head is black, as well as half the hind-part of the neck ; all the under side of the body is of a pure white ; the back, the coverts on the ridge of the wings, and some of the lesser quill-feathers, are of the same colour ; the other coverts and the exterior sides and ends of the greater quill-feathers are black : the tail consists of twelve white feathers : the legs, which are very long, are of a fine blue-colour, and naked higher than the knees ; the webs are dusky, and deeply indented.

It feeds on worms and insects, which it scoops out of the sand with its bill. It lays two eggs about the size of those
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of the pigeon, which are white tinged with green, and spotted with black. These birds are often seen in winter on the eastern shores of this kingdom: in Gloucestershire, at the Severn's mouth; and sometimes on the lakes of Shropshire. It has a chirping pert note, and frequently wades in the waters.

THE CURLEW.

THE weight of the curlew is about twenty-seven ounces; the length, from the top of the bill to the end of the claws, twenty-nine inches; and the breadth, when the wings are extended, three feet four inches. The bill of this bird, which is near six inches long, is narrow, a little crooked, and of a dark brown-colour. The legs are long, bare, and of a dusky blue, having a thick membrane which reaches to the first joint. This bird is of a greyish colour, and its flesh is very rank and fishy, notwithstanding an old English proverb in its favour. In the winter time, these birds frequent our sea-coasts in large flocks, walking on the open sands; feeding on crabs and other marine insects. In the summer they retire

retire to the mountainous part of the country, where they pair and breed. Their legs are of a pale olive-colour, marked with irregular brown spots.

The lesser curlew, called also the wimbrel, greatly resembles the other, its size only excepted, for it weighs no more than twelve ounces.

THE WOODCOCK.

THE woodcock is smaller than the partridge, and usually weighs about twelve ounces : it is fourteen inches in length, and twenty-six in breadth. The bill is straight, and three inches long ; the upper-part falling a little over the under at the tip : it is dusky towards the end, and reddish at the base : a black line extends from the bill to the eyes, and the forehead is of a reddish ash-colour. The head, neck, back, and coverts of the wings are irregularly barred with a kind of a red, black, grey, and ash-colour ; but on the head the black predominates : the quill-feathers are dusky, indented with red marks : the lower-part of the body is of a dirty white, with numerous transverse lines of a dusky-colour.

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The tail, which consists of twelve feathers, is dusky on one web, and has a red mark on the other: the tips are ash-coloured above, and white below. Their legs and feet are of a dusky pale colour, and the claws are divided to their origin. Their eggs are long, and of a pale red, with spots and clouds of a deeper colour.

During summer these birds are inhabitants of the Alps of Norway, Sweden, and the northern parts of Europe. When the frost commences there, they go into milder climates, where the ground is open, and adapted to their manner of feeding: they leave England about the latter end of February, or the beginning of March; though they have been sometimes known to continue here. They separate soon after their arrival here, but they pair again before they return to their native haunts.

They quit France, Germany, and Italy in the same manner; making the cold northern situations their general summer rendezvous. In the winter great numbers of them are seen as far south as Smyrna and Aleppo*; and in

* Russel's Hist. Aleppo, 64.

the same season in Barbary. It has been said that some of them have appeared as far south as Egypt. Those which resort into the countries of the Levant perhaps come from the deserts of Siberia or Tartary, or the cold mountains of Armenia. It is said that woodcocks are unknown in North-America, and Mr. Banks asserts that they are not to be met with in Newfoundland. The flesh of the woodcock is esteemed a great delicacy.

THE GODWIT.

THIS is not much unlike the woodcock, though it is much larger: it is sixteen inches in length, and twenty-seven in breadth: the bill is four inches long, black at the end, and of a pale purple at the base: the feathers of the head, neck, and back, are of a light reddish brown, marked in the middle with a dusky spot. The rump is remarkable for having a white ring. These birds are taken in the fens, in the same season, and in the same manner with the ruffs and rees, and when fattened are esteemed a great delicacy. In September they appear on our coasts

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in small flocks, and remain with us the whole winter. Like the curlew, they walk on the open sands, and feed on insects.

The Red Godwit, which is not a very common species in England, is highly marked with red on the breast, and is more particularly distinguished by its bill, which is not quite straight, but a little reflected upwards.

Mr. Ray mentions a bird that he calls the Lesser Godwit, which weighs about nine ounces.

THE GREAT AMERICAN GODWIT.

THE bill of this bird is about four inches long, straight, and slender; and is of a bright yellow half way next the head, growing gradually dusky till it becomes black at the point. The eyes are more distant from the bill than in other birds. The head and upper-parts of the body are mottled with black and dark brown, except that the rump is brighter, with cross-bars. The quills of the wings next the great ones are of an orange-colour marked with small black spots. The belly and thighs are
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of a brownish white ; the thighs are naked far above the knees ; and the legs and feet are covered with dusky scales.

The White North-American Godwit is wholly white, except the tail, the greater quills, and the small feathers on the ridge of each wing, which are of a dirty white. Its bill turns up towards the point, like that of the avosetta.

THE GREEN SHANK.

THESE birds appear in winter, in small flocks, on our coasts and wet grounds : the bill is two inches and an half ; the upper-chap straight, and the lower reflecting a little upwards : the head and upper-part of the neck are ash-coloured, marked with small dusky lines : the coverts of the wings, the scapulars, and the upper part of the back are of a brownish ash-colour ; the quill-feathers are dusky, their inner-webs being speckled with white : the breast, belly, thighs and tail are white ; the latter being marked with undulated dusky bars. The legs, which are yellow, are long, slender, and bare above

two

two inches higher than the knees. The exterior toe is united to the middle toe as far as the second joint, by a strong membrane, which borders their sides to the very end. It is a bird of an elegant shape, but small, not exceeding six ounces in weight.

The Spotted Red Shank is equal to the preceding in size, and is principally distinguished by the colour of its legs, which is a very bright red.

THE SNIPE.

THE snipe weighs about four ounces; and is in length, from the tip of the bill to the end of the tail, about twelve inches; in breadth it is fourteen inches. The bill is three inches long, straight, and of a dusky-colour. The head is divided lengthways with four black and three red lines: the chin is white, and the neck is varied with brown and red: the scapulars are beautifully striped with black and yellow. The quill-feathers are dusky, but the edge of the first, and the tips of the secondary feathers are white: the breast and belly are white: the tail is dusky, marked with rust colour, and tipped with white; the legs are

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of a palish green, and the claws are black.

The young of these birds are so often found in England, that it is doubtful whether they entirely leave this island; it is, however, certain that some of them continue with us all the summer, making their nests as well on the highest mountains, as in our low moors and marshes, and laying four or five eggs of a dirty olive-colour, marked with dusky spots. Their food is like that of the woodcock, and their flesh is esteemed, as being tender, sweet, and delicate.

THE JACK-SNIPE, OR JUDCOCK.

THIS is not above half the size of a snipe, its weight not exceeding two ounces. The crown of the head is black, tinged with rust-colour; and the neck is varied with white, brown, and a pale red: the scapular feathers are brown, bordered with yellow; the rump is of a glossy bluish purple; the belly white; the greater quill-feathers dusky; the tail feathers brown, edged with tawny; and the legs of an ashy coloured green. The haunts and food

of this species are the same as those of the snipe. It is much less frequent among us, and very difficult to be found.

In this groupe of small birds of the crane kind a great many more might be added. We have enumerated those with the long bill; and shall just mention those which have shorter bills, under a collar of feathers round the neck of the male; namely, the ruff, the knot, the sand-piper, the sanderling, the dunlin, the purre, and the stint.

After these follow the lap-wing, the green plover, the grey plover, the dot-trel, the turnstone, and the sea-lark; which have all very short bills.

These birds of the crane kind, which have short bills, are not, however, without proper provision for their subsistence. They run with surprizing rapidity along the surface of the marsh, or the sea-shore, quartering their ground with great dexterity, and leaving nothing of the insect kind that happens to lie on the surface.

In their seasons of courtship they pair like other birds; but not without violent contests between the males for the choice of the females. A little

172 *The WATER-HEN and COOT.*

bird of this tribe, called the ruff, has got the epithet of the fighter, merely from its great perseverance and animosity on these occasions.

These birds usually breed in some island surrounded with sedgey moors, where men seldom resort. The eggs of all these birds are highly valued by the luxurious; though there is not much culinary art exercised upon them, for they are only boiled hard, and served up without any further preparation. The young of this class being soon hatched, they arrive at maturity soon after their exclusion. As the flesh of almost all these birds is in high estimation, variety of methods are used for taking them; and in particular the ruff and the reeve are greatly sought after, particularly in Lincolnshire and the isle of Ely. These are reckoned a very great delicacy, and it may not be amiss to observe, that the name of the male is the ruff, and that of the female the reeve.

THE WATER-HEN AND THE
COOT.

THERE are two or three birds which seem to form the shade between water-fowls,

Water hen



Coot





fowls, properly so called, and those of the crane kind. They, in some degree, partake of the form of the crane; and, though furnished with long legs and necks, rather swim than wade. They cannot, with propriety, be called web-footed, though they are not entirely divested of membranes, with which their toes are fringed on each side, and which enable them to swim.

The water-hen and the coot fall under this class, and they have too near an affinity, not to be ranked in the same description. They resemble each other in shape, they both have long legs, and thighs which are partly naked: their wings are short, their bills short and weak, their foreheads are bald and destitute of feathers, their colour is black, and their habits are the same. In size they are different; the water-hen weighing about fifteen ounces, and the coot twenty-four. In the coot, the bald part of the forehead is black; in the water-hen it is of a beautiful pink-colour; the toes of the coot are edged with a scolloped membrane; those of the water-hen are straight and narrower.

174 *The WATER-HEN and COOT.*

In their manner of living there is less difference than in their figures; the history of one will therefore serve for both. Birds of the crane kind are furnished with long wings, and can easily change place; the water-hen, whose wings are short, never deserts the pond or river in which it seeks for provision, and the grassy banks which form the margin of those waters. Whether its food consists of pond-weed, or water insects, is not absolutely certain; but pond-weed has been found in their stomachs. She makes her nest upon low trees and shrubs by the water-side; it consists of sticks and fibres. The female lays twice or thrice in a summer; her eggs are white with a tincture of green, and spotted with red. As soon as the young are excluded the egg, they swim in company with the parent, and imitate all her manners; but when they are able to provide for themselves, she drives them off to seek their fortune.

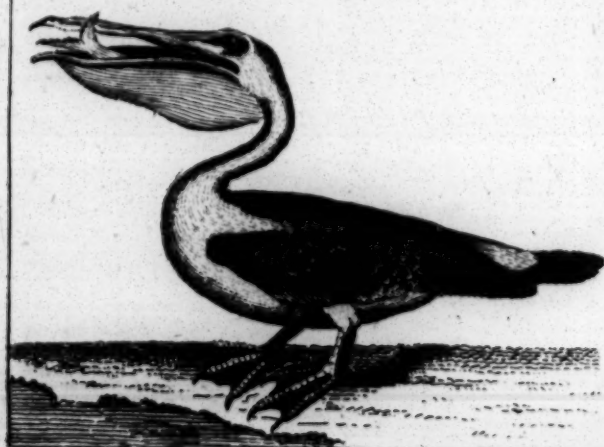
The coot, being a larger bird, is generally seen in larger streams, and more remote from mankind. The water-hen prefers inhabited situations, delighting in ponds, motes, and pools of
water



Grebe



Pelican



The WATER-HEN and COOT. 175

water near gentlemen's houses ; but the coot continues in rivers, and among rushy margined lakes ; where it makes a nest of the weeds which are supplied by the stream, laying them among the reeds, floating on the surface, and rising and falling with the water. It is supported by the reeds among which it is built, so that it is seldom washed into the middle of the stream : but, when this accident happens, which is sometimes the case, the bird sits in her nest, like a mariner in his boat, and, with her legs, steers her cargo into the nearest harbour.

To these birds, with long legs and finny toes, may be added one species more, with short legs and finny toes : the bird I mean is the grebe. It is much larger than either of the former, and its plumage is black and white : its legs are calculated entirely for swimming, and not for walking ; from the knee upwards they are indeed hid in the belly of the bird, and consequently have very little motion. It is on this account that they seldom leave the water, and usually frequent those shallow pools where their faculty of swimming can be turned to the greatest advantage, in fishing and pursuing their prey.

prey. They chiefly frequent the meres of Shropshire and Cheshire, where they breed in a floating-nest among reeds and flags, which are kept steady by the reeds of the margin. The grebe preys upon fish, and is almost perpetually diving. Even in swimming, it shews little more than the head above water, and is extremely difficult to be shot, as it darts down on the least appearance of danger. It never appears on land, and, though frequently disturbed, will never desert that lake, where, by diving and swimming, it can find food and security.

These birds are principally valued for the skin of their breast, the plumage of which is of a most beautiful white, and as glossy as satin. This part is made into tippets; but the skins lose their shining colour about February; and their breasts are entirely bare in breeding-time.

THE LESSER CRESTED GREBE.

THIS species is smaller than a teal; the head and neck are black; the throat spotted with white; the whole upper-
side

side of a blackish brown, except the ridge of the wing above the first joint, and the tips of the middle quill-feathers, which are white; the breast, belly, and inner-coverts of the wings are white. A tuft of long loose feathers hang backwards on each side behind the eyes. The irides are red, and the legs of a dirty green. A bare stripe of red extends from the bill to the eyes.

THE WHITE AND DUSKY GREBE.

THIS is about the size of a teal, and the bill is somewhat more than an inch long. The crown of the head is dusky, as well as the whole upper part of the body: the inner-coverts, the ridge of the wing, and the middle quill-feathers are white; all the rest of the wing being dusky: the bill is joined to the eye by a bare skin of a fine red colour: the belly and the thighs are white, except a few black spots on the latter. In some birds the whole neck is ash-coloured.

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This bird is frequently seen in Lincolnshire, where it breeds.

THE LITTLE GREBE.

THE length of this bird is ten inches, the breadth sixteen inches, and the weight about six or seven ounces. The head is thick set with feathers, which on the cheeks of old birds are of a bright bay. The top of the head, the neck, breast, and the whole upper-side of the body are of a deep brown, tinged with red: the great quill-feathers are dusky; the belly is ash-coloured, mixed with a silvery white; and the legs are of a dirty green. These birds dive with great swiftness, and remain a long time under water: their food is fish and water-plants. They frequent rivers, and form their nests in the water near the banks, which, not being fastened, rise and fall with the water. The female lays five or six white eggs, which she always covers when she quits the nest. How they are hatched appears astonishing, as
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little Grebe



Eared Grebe





the water rises through the nest, and always keeps them wet. The nest is about a foot thick, consisting of an amazing quantity of grass, and water-plants.

THE END OF VOL. VII.



